Ross Dowson archives – Correspondence – Year 1974
Documents: Bold Italics

01_15 Letter to (oldest Brother) Murray (Dowson) and Jeanette, re: sending him movement discussion documents; his working conditions at a hotel job

01_20 Letter to Ted Grant, *The Militant*, London, England, re: seeking advice on Lenin`s writing on the 3rd International vis-à-vis ultraleftism and parliamentary labor parties

01_30 ***Document: application for Canada Council grant: ‘’A History of Canadian Trotskyism;`` Summary and Description of Project; RD`s resumé and qualifications***

01_31 Letter to Joseph Starobin (veteran radical) re: RD's application for a Canada Council grant to write up a history of the movement

01_97 *(Undated first draft)* of "Item 10," attached to application for a Canada Council grant, a summary of project and main features of research plan (not used in the application)

01_98 ***Document: LSA/LSO IIB Vol.2 No.1 (Jan. 1974), ‘’Response by RD" at January Plenum, to Art Y.`s appeal, re: the complications that differences over the 1970 movement documents place before a transfer of leadership***

01_99 ***Document: LSA/LSO IIB Vol. 2 No. 3 (Jan. 1974), ‘’The Subversion of Our NDP Orientation – Statement of Labor Party Tendency,"*** *(re-published by the Socialist League in April 1976 as ‘’The subversion of the revolutionary socialist orientation to the N.D.P.; a summary document of the struggle against it")*

02_09 Letter to Maurice and Cynthia (F.), re: his hotel job, the CC grant application; the NDP brass moving against us in BC and the press campaign against the BC NDP; the LPT document published but lack of discussion in Toronto East

02_18 ***Document to Members of the LSA/LSO and YS/LJS re: the resignation of all 19 LPT members; ‘’the LSA/LSO has degenerated into a sect;*** *(with) the wholesale abandonment of our political positions in a sectarian direction… with the development of … an extreme factionalism … it has become impossible to hold out any hope of influencing and halting the plunge into sectarian isolation."*

02_19 Letter to Jack (Barnes), SWP, re: having quit the LSA you will want to cut off your mailing to me

02_25 Letter to Jane (E.?), re: assurances LPT members will continue our work outside the LSA/LSO and value the comrades staying within it

02_25B Letter to Cynthia and Maurice (F.), re: how a struggle within to replace the LSA leadership would have been counter-productive; the deepening almost hysterical sectarianism on display at the last Plenum

03_03 Letter to Ivan Avakumovic, UBC, re: historians` lack of awareness of Canadian Trotskyist journals; RD`s discussion with Starobin and his project for a history of Canadian Trotskyism

03_03B Letter to Jane (E.?), re: a characteristic of ultraleftists is their denial that Marxism is an integral part of the humanistic tradition

03_06 Letter to Charlie (--?), re: setting up the Socialist League and looking for a HQ; our tendency booklet on our NDP orientation in progress (‘’Against Sectarianism: the challenge of the labor party’’ by W. Shier, A. Levi & J. Jennings, June 1974, Socialist League)

03_15 Letter to the Canada Council, Ottawa, re: after consulting other historians of the left, RD`s opinion he should concentrate on the political history but he leaves open the option to make an application for a Humanities Grant as well

03_19 Letter to Ivan Avakumovic, Vancouver, re: welcoming his work in progress and suggesting the themes he would take up himself

04_17 Letter to Dick (P.) Vancouver, re: SL successfully launches forums and a social; RMG proposes joint trade union committee; activity at the camp; why we left the LSA, joint talks with LSAers on teachers work

04_98 ***Document in LSA/LSO IIB Vol. 2 No. 5, April, RD on ‘’Comments on the character of the NDP and NDP governments;”*** *not useful to call the NDP ‘’social-democratic;” or calling the NDP ‘’a bourgeois government”*

04_99 ***Document: ‘’The Socialist League and the Struggle for a Socialist Canada;”*** *The challenge before Canadian socialists; Problems of the Canadian Left; Need for a Transitional Program…”*

05_03 Letter to Maurice and Cynthia (F.), Vancouver, re: colossal development in Portugal; activities of the SL; trade union circle off the ground, a potent mix of 3 or 4 Trotskyist tendencies; developments in the NDP

05_05 Letter to John Glenn, re: MISC`s strident Canadian unionism on principle; discussion on Canadian nationalism and the integrated nature of the Canadian state

05_06 Letter to Irving Abella, York University, re: RD re-applying for his historical project; need his sponsorship (Duplicates to Ivan Avakumovic & Joseph Starobin)

05_13 Proposal re: ‘’A contribution to a discussion on the SL publication;’’ favorable opportunities for our publishing a journal; its news and theoretical content; not for a magazine but a newspaper, a tabloid format to present theoretical material as well

05_17 Letter to Harry (S.), Pat (--?) and Jeff (S?), Newfoundland, re: RD`s new condo residence; his talk to unionist comrades on Canadian union autonomy; queries about their activities; growth of the RMG

05_21 Letter to Steve (H?), London (ON): no LSAers at Camp; question of maintenance of lodge, held in common, *(*Socialist League*)* considering publishing a tabloid

05_22 Letter to Avakumovic, re: no longer in contact with Henri Gagnon

06_24 Letter to Darrell, LSA: Camp fence needs fixing, no maintenance done by LSA, some repairs done; need LSA contact for input

06_25 Letter to John Glenn, Oswekin, re: Reactions to the new paper (*Forward*); the appearance of *Inprecor* from the FI; lack of overall approach in LSA – everything dealt with from issue to issue

06_98 *(Undated article found in June)* ‘’to be translated by Armando into Portuguese for submission to *Republica,* Lisbon;’’ setting the record straight on the Trotskyist current in that country

06_99 *(Undated letter found in June)* to Prof. Norman Penner, York University, re: sending him a copy of his Canada Council application and a copy of *Forward* for his perusal

07_03 Letter to Steve (--?) London (ON) re activities of the S.L.

07_05 Letter to Joan Newbigging, Toronto, re: report on work done on the camp (Poundmaker)

07_07 Letter to Darrell (LSA) re: payment of Camp tax bill, forwarding RD’s mail to his home address

07_29 Letter to Archie Callaghan, Nfld., re: Waffle purged from the NDP last weekend, distributing revolutionary appeal to Portuguese fishermen

07_29B Letter to I. Avakumovic, UBC, re: misc. historical notes

07_99 (*Undated text)* ‘’Partial transcript of Dowson tape, summer 1974,” edited *(---)* by Arnie Mintz; 5 pages of historical recollections of RD`s personal life; details of political and movement experiences *(see also Mintz: “A sketch of Ross Dowson, October, 1988”)*

08_03 Letter to John (Glenn, member Transitional Program Tendency/LSA), re: LSA is for differentiation and confrontation with NDP, SL is for critical but unconditional support, SL-TPT relations

08_03B Letter to the (Transitional Program) Tendency, Comrades: SL fears dissolution of LSA calls upon us to meet with your tendency

08_06 Letter to Bob Dick, Lasalle, QC, re: British comrade (?) visiting Toronto; LSA contacts in Montreal

08_12 Letter to Darrell (LSA) enclosing cheque for guests using Camp; maintenance work on the lodge done and to be done

08_15 Letter to Norman Penner, Glendon College, re: recollections of Stewart Smith and Sam Carr (CPCers)

08_23 Letter to Don D., Vancouver, re: our decision for a monthly *Forward*; news of local ex-LSAers coming around the SL

08_25 Letter to friends re: calling a meeting of Camp owners; tabling share of costs to all owners and those paid

09_04 Letter to Ron D., Vancouver, re: moving out with *Forward*; need news of BC NDP convention

09_13 Letter to Steve (--?), re: news of the camp, SL classes, our intervention at the NDP convention

09_18 Letters to Irving Abella, Ivan Avakumovic, Joseph Starobin, all re: RD turned down for Canada Council grant

09_18B Letter to The Canada Council re: his application turned down, re: future approval

09_28 Letter to Canada Council, re: re-submitting a similar proposal for a one-year project

10_01 Letter to Dave (P., Oshawa auto worker) re: two political contacts, one of whom is Gary O’Brien, student of Canadian radical history

10_16 Letter to Ron D., Vancouver, re: his material late, *Forward* article on BC published, activities of Waffle post-expulsion; Gord D. now on staff part-time

10_99 ***Introduction to pamphlet:*** "***For a Free Independent Soviet Ukraine!"*** – 3 articles by Leon Trotsky, 24 pp

11_18 Letter to Art Grey, Coldwater re: need to discuss with Art K., LSA operation in Orillia

11_27 Letter to Sheila Turgeon, Richmond BC, re: the SL conference and growth of the movement; comments on Toronto and BC contacts

12_12 Letter to Dick P., Vancouver, re: the SL is established and RD`s plans to earn a living

12_13 Letter to Charlie, St. Catharines, re: RD`s talk on Brock campus and chat with student contacts

12_14 Letter to Gary O`Brien, Toulouse, re: fifth issue of *Forward* out; setting up a bookstore; Forward Forums; discussions with Marxist Institute; *Rouge* and the situation in France; his *Forward* article "Maurice Spector on the national question (Nov. 1974)

12_16 Letter to Darrell (LSA) re: submitting his (minutes) notes of Camp meeting, prior to official corporation meeting, contact RD at SL-HQ

12_24 Letter to M. Rashid, Kerala, India, re: sending him back issues of Forward; our pamphlet (LT on Ukrainian nationalism); the role of the Socialist League in carrying on Trotskist tradition in Canada

12_96 *(Handwritten note by R.D.)* re: John Swindon's response to a toast in favor of the independent press, from *The Worker*, Sept.13, 1924

12_97 *(Undated letter found in 1974)* to *L'Internationale*, Paris, requesting copies of the Greek FI publication

12_98 *(Undated, found in 1974)* Notices of class series, Forums held by Socialist League

12_99 *(Undated letter)* to Art Grey, re: answering his profound demoralization

January 15, 1974
40 Homewood Ave # 2311
Toronto M4Y 2k2

(Ross's oldest brother)

Dear Murrany and Jeanette;

As you can see I started this note several days ago. It was postponed by the pressures of my job at the Victoria Hotel--a six day week and som what physically demanding.one.

I assume that you got the parcel that I sentxxx up . I had ocassion to familiarize myself with that Atlaws whe n I was working in A and A. Of course there are better ones available but they all tend to put Canada in its place as part of the world power structure. As in habitants of this part of the world we should naturally want to know more about it--I think thatthe material on Canada is quite useful--all the more in that it does not assume things that cannot safely be assumed. Perhaps with the additionof the federal governments Atals and Gazeteer I oterdid it however it was cheap and the maps are beautiful. The tortoise shell necklace is from Cuba--the striging is somewhat amateur but the shell is beautful I think. Ruth has one somewhat similar and I have enough material for another. I came across the material quite by accident.. As for the Raslin cartoon book....some of them are quite brilliant I think. A good conversato opn peice for your coffee table when you entertain. some of the teaching staff.

I am enclosing with this note a copy of a document that you might find worthwhile reading. It was put out on a crash basis for the recent LSA/LSO plenum. We put aside the Canadian nationalism question because in many waysthis is a more central problem --as we say it involves non sectarian revolutionary politics. The circumstances of publication account for its poor technical quality . It is probably more interesting to you as this question is placed within its international framework. Germain-Mandel made our NDP orientation a central focus of his attack on the LSA/LSO and as you will see the LSA/LSO leadership has capitulated to his attack.

The Victoria Hotel is part of the Cara food empire--one of the chiefs keeps this old hotel as sort of a hobby--probably speculating on land values whie he pulls in the dough from the two bars which along with other things I keep stocked with kegs and bottles of beer. Unfortunately I work by myself on a schedule that they have got closely timed and the staff is quite small but I have met a couple of good types-- a young guy who is a maintenance plumber--an athiest and pro NDP. The woman who operate the dishwashing machine is a good proletarian type and one of the chefs --a Ukrainian - is a former CPers who left with the Khrushchov revelations . But in general most of the staff are not good types--a lot of their activity is a form of obsequiousness to the customers. I got this as a part time job--I am replacing a Malaysian fellow who has gone off to Singapore for a 5 week holiday. The five weeks will get me onto unemployment insurance. I get $2.50 an hour --I find that most of the staff get only $2 and when I turned down that amount it caused somewhtat of a sensation among the lower echelon of bosses. The chefs know me from the Vanguard Bookstore--they worked in a grill just up the street where I used to eat--and the other nite I guy I know very well came in with a party who I became aware as I waked out had been talking about me. However I have only two weeks to go before the fewllow I replace returns--nut then they appear to be looking for a nitch for me. At the end of this month I will be submitting my appplication for a Canada Council grant. This coming Tuesday xxxx I am spending an evening with Joseph Starobin --former forieng news editor of the US Daily Worker who is on staff at York Campus. I am hoping that he will be useful in my Council application.

The apartment is working out fine--I got my interest rate reduced to 8½%. Buthe havent had time to do much to fix it up to my liking.

your truly

Ross Dowson

January 20, 1974
Ross Dowson
40 Homewoood Ave., # 2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2
Canada

Ted Grant
c/o The Militant
375 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9RA
England

Dear Comrade Grant

It is some years now since we met. However I have tried to follow the Militant along with the many other revolutionary socialist publications that come into our offices over here. Perhaps I should have been following The Militant closer than the others because of the worjkthat you comrades are doing in the British Labor Party. as you know we have a labor party formation over here in Canada in the New Democratic Party. It was recently re-elected in the province of Manitoba with a strong plurality and elected for the first time in the most important of the Western provinces-- British Columbia. It is probable that it will be elected to office within in the next few years in the key industrial province of Ontario. Thus the new radicalization, as we have long anticipated, is findung its epxresson in the New Democratic Party.

However as the radicalization moves into the ranks of the working class orienting them to the NDP the many elements in the youth radiclization who played a valueable initiatory role have beeome suscepitble to ulta left concepts. The air in these circles is riff with cries about the NDP being a social democratic party, a party of the Second International, the murderers of Leibknchet and Luxemburg, and NDP governmentsbybinnotsing but bourgeois governments which cannot be be supported in anyway

I have decided to attempt to make a really serious contribution to this discussion and on a different level than I have done heretofore. I would like to bring out the Lenin and the Third International contribution on this question particularly insofar as it relates to the British Labor Party experience. The British revolutionary socialist left has long been cursed with ultra leftism so I cant cannot help but feel that various studies of this question have been made by such comrades as yourself or that you would be aware of studies in this area. I have for instance a very interesting little pamphlet written by Brian Pearce- early History of the Communist Party of Great Britain -that first appeared in in a 1957 issue of Labour Review

I would very much appreciate any help that you could give me in thi s area. Probably there are internal discussuin bulletin items that you could have XeroXed for me. books or pamphlets that you could refer me to which I could hope to obtain over here somewhere.
I of course would be pleased to remit funds to cover any expenses incurred for anything you would be able to do for me

I would appreciate a reply shortly to this note whether you are able to help me or not.

with Trotskyist greetings

Ross Dowson

Humanities and Social Sciences Division
CANADA COUNCIL
P.O. Box 1047
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1P 5V8

Application for Research Grant
– Français au verso –

Date of application: January 30, 1974

1 Name: Ross Dowson

Academic rank:

Department or School:

Institution:

Telephone: 9614554
office
home -/
area code 416

2 Mailing address: Apt.2311 40 Homewood Ave, Toronto M4Y 2K2

3 Names and appointments of other principal investigators

yet to be determined, if any

4 Short title of project: A History of Canadian Trotskyism

Discipline or area: independent researcher

5 Previous Canada Council applications

nil

6 Starting date of project: immediately on receiving grant

Planned completion date: two and a half to three years

Projects to be completed within 18 months may be reported in the first grant period (first space below). For longer projects, the 1st and 2nd period should not exceed 12 months each, and renewal applications will be required for each 12-month period.

Insert here the amount of the present request and anticipated dates and amounts of future requests to complete the project.

7

Date Amount	From June/74 to June/75 $ 8,300.00	From June/75 to June/76 $ 8,300	From June/76 to June/77. $ 8,300

8 *University Support*

The Head of the institution or his authorized delegate should sign here to indicate support and willingness to administer funds relating to this project.

Signature .....

Title .....

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the statements in this application are true and that

- [/] I am a Canadian citizen
- [ ] I have been a landed immigrant since .....
- [ ] I have been a resident of Canada since birth
- [ ] I have been employed full-time in a Canadian university since .....

Applicant's signature .....

Noted by .....
For Department, Institute or School

The Canada Council in reviewing applications will normally consult qualified assessors. You are asked to give 2 references, preferably from outside your university: one who is familiar with your scholarship, and one whom you consider to be an expert in this area of research.

9 References – Names, ranks, addresses:

	specialist in field	knows my work
A Irving Abella York University, Glendon Campus, Toronto	/	/
B Joseph Starobin York University, Glendon Campus, Toronto	/	/

MAY 1971

CANADA COUNCIL

Summary of Project

For purposes of public statements and references in the annual reports, Council requires a short summary of the project written in terms that can be readily understood by the general public. Applicants are therefore requested to submit such a summary in about 200 words.

One of the most important manifestations of the worldwide youth . radicalization, which has been extending into the ranks of women and in beginning to penetrate the traditional organizations of the working class has been its attempts to place itself and the problems it confronts into a historical perspective. In the United States in particular, a variety of vigorous studies of the labor and socialist movements have already contributed greatly to the leavening of historical writing in that country.

This process is also well underway in Canada. The past decade has witnessed the publication of a number of important studies ranging in scope and style from Martin Robin s Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, Scott's Sweat and Struggle to Abella's Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour, to stimulating reviews along the line of Kealey, Kealey and Warrion s guide to manuscripts or Langdon's study of the nineteenth century Canadian labor movement (Journal of Canadian Studies)

As a contribution to this process I hope to write a history of Canadian Trotskyism based on a wealth of documentary evidence and personal experience accumulated over forty years in the Trotskyist movement.

A portrait of the Trotskyist movement in Canada is essential to any comprehensive appreciation of the Canadian labor and socialist movement. It is interesting in this respect to note that the contributions by the veteran US Trotskyist James P. Cannon on the history of American Communism and on American Trotskyism have been generously acclaimed by such scholars as L.Feuer, T. Draper and D Bell. They all use Cannon extensively in their work on intellectuals, on Communism and socialism. I would hope that my study on the Canadian scene, which will be more researched and rounded, would be equally useful, not only to students of the left but to students of Canadian history generally.

Maurice Spector, who had been active as a youth in the Ontario labor and socialist_movement just prior to and during World War I, under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution joined with others to launch the Communist Party of Canada. He soon became its outstanding theoretician, orator and publicist. For identifying himself with Leon Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinization of the CPSU andthe Third International he was summarily expelled from the CP and began the process of rebuilding the movement. Within a couple of years he was joined by Jack MacDonald, a pattern maker by trade and a recognized union leader and popular speaker who had held the post of executive secretary of the Communist Party until his expulsion in 1930. Together they launched the first public Trotskyist formation in this country, The eminent Canadian poet, Earl Birney, played a prominent role in the Trotskyist movement in the Thirties. It was following World War II that Malcolm Bruce and Maxwell Armstrong, both of whom had been founding executive members of the Communist Party, joined the Trotskyist movement. Armstrong had been Socialist Party of Canadian Toronto organizer before World War I and Bruce had been a leader in The One Big Union in the West. The Canadian Trotskyist movement clearly represents an important line of continuity in the history of Canadian radicalism

In its press coverage and internal documentation it has addressed itself to the fundamental problems of Canadian revolutionary theory and practice. The CCF, the CIO, Canada's involvement in World War II, the Cold War, Quebec and other central features of Canadian life have all been treated extensively.

It has had a considerable influence in a number of areas of Canadian life. Ukrainian supporters published a Ukrainian language press which had considerable impact among Ukrainian-Canadians both in Winnipeg and Toronto. Some members played important rolesin the CIO, particulalry in Quebec and the West. At certain

junctures it has even been able to make a dramatic appeal to the general populace as in the 1948 Toronto mayorality elections which garnered it almost 24,000 votes, almost 20% of the poll. More recently it has played, what even its critics recognize as a key role in the anti-Vietnam war and women's liberation movements. It is in short, the history of a movement which has addressed itself to the main issues of Canadian life and is worthy of a study as a dynamic current in Canadian life, and not a sect.

Unfortunately previous historical writing has not recorded this accurately or properly , largely because of the serious lack of readily available information. For instance William Rodney's valueable work, Soldiers of the International, has Spector and MacDonald's attempts "to form an opposition CP more in keeping with their views" failing "for lack of support" and ending with Spector's leaving Canada in 1936. Abella's study of the CIO would have benefitted greatly by access to archives which record the Trotskyist role and views on the CIO-CCL.

To redress the errors and misjudgements of previous writings and to provide a clear and accurate picture of the Trotskyist movement is a contribution of hopefully no small significance to Canadian writing.

-30-

CANADA COUNCIL

Description of Project

Short title of project (as given on page 1, item 4)

A History of Canadian Trotskyism

11 Research plan

Please provide supporting information under the following headings, as appropriate, in sufficient detail to permit an informed judgment by qualified assessors:

1. Scope and objectives of the study.
2. Theoretical significance and practical importance of the project.
3. Relationship to existing research and literature.
4. Research plan and methods, including names and roles of participants and consultants and sources of research material.
5. Work already completed and in progress.
6. Schedule of work to be done.
7. Copies of questionnaires and other research instruments.

If this request is for a renewal or extension of an existing grant, a progress report and financial statement should be attached.

1-- My intention is to write a rounded study of the Canadian Trotskyist movement which could be deposited in some suitable archive available for examination by anyone interested, and which could be edited down for publication as a book.

Of necessity this study would commence with the worldwide radicalization that swept Europe culminating in the Russian Revolution of 1917, which, shaking up the entire Canadian left, led to the formation of the Canadian Communist Party. The founding of the Communist Party in 1921 marked the first serious attempt in this country to build a revolutionary vanguard party. While this party did not by any means collapse, but continued to attract thousands to its ranks, within the short space of 8 years it underwent a profound degeneration. This process was resisted unsuccessfully, first by Maurice Spector, its leading theoretician, and later by Jack MacDonald, its national secretary. Stalin, who headed up a parasitic caste that grew up on the impoverished, isolated first workers' state, politically expropriated the Soviet masses and took over the Third International. Under Stalin's influence the parties of the Third International, including the youthful and inexperienced Communist Party of Canada, from instruments directed towards the achievement of workers' power in their own countries became pawns in the Kremlin's diplomatic maneuvers with the world capitalist powers.

By 1934 Spector and MacDonald had pulled together sufficient forces to launch the Workers Party of Canada, one of the five original groups across the world that answered Trotsky's call to commence anew the building of Leninist parties under the banner of the Fourth International.

I propose to write a history of that movement, its aims and its contributions to Canadian political life. I would take it up to the 1970's and the new radicalization that has been sweeping through the student youth, radicalizing women and beginning to stir the NDP and the trade unions.

2-- This project would fill in a serious gap that has long existed in the history of the working class movement in Canada. It will provide new insights into a series of important and complex political and social theories as tested in the Canadian context; for instance the law of combined and uneven development, the relation between reformist and revolutionary politics, nationalism in an advanced capitalist economy. I anticipate that the history of the Trotskyist movement will bring out aspects of the trade union movement, the labor and socialist movement, particularly the CCF and the NDP and the Communist Party, heretofore not clearly grasped.

CANADA COUNCIL

Description of Project (continued)

3-- This projected history would join the steadily mounting number of writings that are a response to the increasing desire on the part of the Canadian peopleto understand their past in order to gain insight into their future. There is no existing study, partial or otherwise, of the Canadian Trotskyist movement. There is a fragmentary study or history of American Trotskyism by James P. Cannon and a synpotic history of the Fourth International by Pierre Frank. This history would be the first attempt to write a comprehensive history of any Trotskyist formation.

4-- The most important source of material will be the press of the Canadian Trotskyist movement and the archives in my possession. Over the years I have had occasion to write partial studies, biographic notes, vignettes, short surveys, reviews and appreciations of related material. I possess several unpublished interviews with former Trotskyist activists in various parts of Canada. It will be necessary to widen the number of persons interviewed and to seek access to archival material that I understand Irving Abella has been accumulating. I have already made an intensive study of the first year of the Worker and indexed it. It would be necessary to examine in detail the file of Workers Voice, the organ of a dissident Canadian Trotskyistformation that is in the possession of the New York Public Library, and to examine the archives of the CCF, particularly material related to the CCF youth movement, the CCYM. I would seek permission to examine the archives of the Canadian Labour Congress, particulary the record of labor conventions. I would seek the advice and consult a wide number of individuals ranging from participatns in the Trotskyist movement and opponent political currents, and the growing number of academics who are researching areas of labor and social history related to a serious study of the history of Canadian Trotskyism.

5-- There has been considerable progress in gathering together some of the key material for such a study.

6-- I would commence to work on the project on an intensive full-time basis immediately a grant was made available.

In view of the fact that I do not have any academic qualifications I am taking the liberty of appending the following;

I am uniquely qualified to write a history of the Canadian Trotskyist movement. Now 57 years of age I am able to take a long view of some 40 years of active participation in the Canadian political arena as a unionist, as a candidate for public office, as a lecturer to campus audiences, as a speaker and agitator and as a writer and editor. Since 1945 I have written extensively on many of the major issues of Canadian politics. I became editor of the Trotskyist press early in 1946 and held that post until January 1970--a period of some 24 years.

I was executive secretary of the Canadian Trotskyist movement until 1972.

19 I am personally acquainted with all the major participants in the Trotskyist movement since the late Thirties, and in the last twenty odd years played an important role in all the controversies that shaped the Trotskyist movement.

In general I continue to stand today where I stood when I first joined the Trotskyist movement when 16 years of age. I make no secret of my political bias. I intend to turn this profound acquaintance with my subject to advantage by as scrupulously as possible basing my study on documentary evidence. I have no intention whatsoever of defending my political positions. I will seek to portray events and concepts as they unfolded out of historic necessity.

20 I have already accumulated considerable material on the subject and am acquainted with much of the key source material that I would have to weigh and evaluate for a serious study of the type I envisage. I am not only well acquainted with and up-to-date on the Canadian scene but I have had the opportunity to acquire valueable experiences in other parts of the globe. I have visited both Cuba and Algeria and have spent considerable time in England familiarizing myself with the British trade union movement and in particular with the British Labour Party.

21	22
What languages do you speak? English write? English read? French and English	Applicant's signature Gerald Dowson Date of submission Jan 30/74

CANADA COUNCIL

Statement of Qualifications and Experience (continued)

Name Ross Dowson

23 Research areas of special interest in recent years

the labor and socialist movement

24 Publications and significant articles. (Please list or attach prepared list)

The Power and the Dilemma of the Trade Unions--pamphlet---1968 and 1969 editions
Pathfinder Press-Toronto

Canada-U.S. Relations--a socialist viewpoint--pamphlet 1969
Pathfinder Press-Toronto

The Coming Canadian Revolution--pamphlet, 1967 --Pathfinder Press, Toronto

Fifty Years of World Revolution-1917-1967-edited and with an introduction by the eminent Belgian economist Ernest Mandel, contains an essay by Ross Dowson entitled The Rise and Fall of the Third International -Merit Publication, New York

At various times I have been a frequent contributor to Intercontinental Press, an international weekly in the English language edited by Joseph Hansen with Ernest Mandel, Pierre Frank, George Novack and Livio Maitain as contributing editors

I have contributed articles from time to time to the New York monthly magazine, International Socialist Review.

The Canadian Trotskyist press over a span of some 27 years appearing as Workers Vanguard and later as Labor Challenge, contains innumerable articles by myself.

(RD letter handwritten)

Jan. 31/74
40 Homewood Ave., #2311, Toronto
Ross Dowson

Joseph Starobin

Dear Joe

Thanks for the excellent omelette, your good advice and the opportunity to meet you.

Today I sent off my application for the Canada Council grant. I didn`t manage to get up to show it you as a very good friend of mine lecturing at U. of T. and who has obtained other grants insisted, as an old pro, in helping me frame my application. I worked out a first draft, heard his criticisms, which as I recall would be more or less along the line of yours, and then managed to polish it up only in time to get it under the deadline.

So it is off – and we await the word. In going over it in detail it is clear that an Explorations Grant is more applicable to me – however they may first pass it on. We will see.

I'm enclosing the Stewart Smith pamphlet that I am sure both he and you will find useful in your discussions. My library is not very extensive on the Canadian CP but I also have Stewart`s speech re: the 7th World Congress and Our Tasks (Popular Front 1935) if you would like it.

Among the persons that Abella mentioned he was having interviewed he made no mention of Sam Carr. This would be a grave oversight – but you would have to be the interviewer! (…)

Fraternally, Ross

A History of Cabadian Trotskyism--200 word summary of the project nnd the main features of the research plan (Item 10)

JAN. 1974 Winnipeg Renewal

Replaced

Despite recurring promnoucements of its demise the revolutionary socialist currebt called Trotskyism, a term derived fromnthe name of its chief inspirer and internationally renowned revolutoonist Leon Trotsky lives on and in recent years has come increasingly to the fore.

Following Soviet leader Brezhnev's report to the 24th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1971, during which in passing he mentioned Trotskyism as an important danger , an internatiinal (anti Trotskyest) campaign was launched through the Communist Parties of the world under the direction of a 21 page aeticle in Ko,munist, authored by Boris Ponomarev, a secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

Singled out for special attention were the French Trotskyists who played an important role in the May-June events of 1968, along with the US Trotskyists who played a leading role in the anti-Vietnam war movement in that country.

For their purposes the Soviet ideologues characterized Trotskyism as a "weap on of anti-communism."

The editors of Newsweek placed a$10,000 ad in the September 12 1972 New York Times attacking the world-wide Trotskyist movement. The publishers of Newsweek attempted to characterize Trotskyism and its forces organized in the Fourth International as anti-capitalist, antiimperialist and anti-bureaucratic Fourth

frame."

What is Trotskyism, what are its ~~fundamental~~ aims and purposes, what has been its significance. The applicant aims to research and present a history of the Trotskyist movement as it arose and developed and has functioned in Canada, as an aid to shcolars and researchers of the Cacandian social and political scene.

The Canadian Trotskyist movement arose out of the Communist Party in its earliest formative years, commencing with Maurice Spector's adherence to the views of Trotsky and his ~~Russian~~ Left Opposition in the CPSU in the mid-twenties and his expulsion from the Canadian Communist Party in November 1928. Spector had been active as a youth in the Camadian labor and socialist movement ~~during~~ just prior to and during World War I and became the chief theoretician of the Canadian Communist Party in its founding days. He was later joined by Jack MacDonald, a popular working class leader who had been the Communist Party's national secretary--a post he held until his expulsion in November 1930.

The author of the most valueable work on this decisive ~~years~~ decade of the youthful history of the Communist Party of Canada which terminated in its Stalinization has Sector and MacDonald "attempting to form an opposition CP more in keeping with their views" but failing "for lack of support" and endig "when Sepctor left to settle in New York in 1936 (William Rodney-Soldiers of the International.) This error is due to the lack of serious (material steadily) availbel to Canadian researchers.

The movement that Sector and MacDonald formed continued to function

despite great difficulties, finally winning to its ranks in the late 1940's both Malcolm Bruce and Maxwell Armstrong founding members of the CPC's central committee. Jack Kavanaugh, fouding central committee member and OBU leaders who left for Australia joind the Trotskyist movement in that country.

Spector and MacDonald launched a paper in 1931 which appeared intermittently for several years. more consistantly during 1938-39 until it was forced underground for its opposition to World War II, and on a regualr basis from 1945 until today. Their Canadian-Ukrainai co-thinkers also published a paper, Robitnitschi Visti. Upon their request because of its relevancy to their political work amongst Canadian Unkrainians Trotsky wrote two notable articles in defence of the national development of the peoples of the USSR projecting revolutionary secession of the Ikraine from the USSR.

As of 1972 the Canadian Trotskyists organized as the League for Socialist Action-La Ligue Socialist Ouvriere publish two periodicals--the twice monthly English lagguage Labor Challenge, and the monthly French language Liberation. The Tortskyist youth movement, the Young Socialists/Lgue des Jeunes Socialistes publish a monthly paper.

This paper is rich in information and analysis of the major social-political issues confronting Canadians over a span of 40 years. Particularly notable is its analysis of the union movement, the CCF, the NDP, the anti-nuclear arms movement where Trotskyists played an important role, the big union struggles of the thirties, the CCF and the controversy over the NDP in which the Tortskyists attempted to intervene the anti-Vietnam war movement and the youth radicalization of the sixties.

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The Trotskyist press and the discussions and debates inside the Trotskyist movement itself are rich in information and analysis of the major social- political issues confronting Canadians both in the international and national context over almost the revolutionary socialist a span of ~~xxxx~~ 50 years . Of special note is ~~xxxx~~analysis of the unemployed workers movements of the thirties, particularly in the greater Toronto area where Trotskyists played an important role, the big union struggles of the mid-forties, notably the autoworkers and the West Coast woodworkers, the CCF through left wing caucuses and the struggle, ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxx~~ to win it to socialist policies , the controversies over the character of the projected New Democratic partty in which the Trotskyists attempted to intervene, and the anti-Voetnam war movement and the youth radicalization of the sixties in which the Trotskyists played an important role particularly on some of the major university campuses.

The Trotskyists ,as orthodox Marcists project themselves as playing a key major role in future class conflicts which they conceive as cuminating in a socialist Canada. Regardless of ones evaluation of this as to the validity of these orijections Trotskyist movement is worthy of close study.

In ther continued efforts to ~~xxxx~~ form a revolutionary party in keeping with the viewp int enubcuated by both Spector and MacDonald , their contemporaries continue to ern the speical attention of the Stalinized Communist Party of Canada, ~~xx~~ A recent article appearing in Communist Viewpoint (Sept-Octo 1970) which expresses the views of the Communist Party of Canada etitled Ulta Infantile

Anarchist Left describes the Canadian Trotskyists as "the oldest, most established and most sublte grouping" and as "the only one with any organizational continuity," a group with "adaptabil ity, arising from experience, which makes them the most dangeroua current."

A historybof Canadian Trotskyism would fill a notable gap in Canadian political and social studies.

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(Starting from an Internal Bulletin, Jan. 1974, page 9)

RESPONSE BY ROSS DOWSON

(The following is an unedited transcript of Ross Dowson's response to Art Young's appeal.)

Of course it is obvious that there are tremendous tensions in the movement and have been in the movement since a couple of years, I would say. I know that at several of the plenums, Comrade R. has talked about the transfer or transition of leadership, but when the comrades started their campaign against the 1968 documentation "Canada/U.S. relations," I started to question that such a transition could take place. And when it widened to "Vive le Québec Libre" and the characterization of the labor leadership in Quebec, and when it further widened to the women's liberation document, a whole series of implications involved there which generally removed the centrality of the abortion question from our women's liberation work… that's what the character of that campaign was, that torturous discussion in the branch for some time and in the movement for some time.

The differences widened and continue to widen. As a matter of fact I remember the comrades were talking about me writing the history of the movement. I told several of the comrades that I didn't know what part of the history remained that could be written. I considered the discussion on Canadian nationalism a very important discussion, extremely important. I'm sure you all did too. But I drew different conclusions from it than you did, quite different conclusions.

I had a rather interesting experience when I spoke to the branch once about the Riddell/Young document. I prefaced my comments identifying myself with certain aspects of the document and dissociating myself from others, by saying that of course in this case I wasn't talking about the aspects dealing with Canadian nationalism but I want to inform the comrades that I haven't changed my view. That set off all kinds of flurry in our movement. One comrade thought that as soon as there's vote in our movement on a position, minority comrades give up their view. I told him, oh no, I still have this view, and I'm doing some work on it.

At any rate, there are profound differences. Where are they going? I'm not at all sure where they are going. I say that advisedly. I'm not at all sure. Considerable attrition in the movement has been taking plate of comrades who are not at all supporters of the RCT, who disagreed with the RCT all down the line. It's a persistent phenomenon. I've attempted to prevent that. Carried on quite a campaign to prevent that. However, it's failed in many cases, a great many cases.

I don't know the great significance of this mimeographed back page. It is a very technical, simple thing. Comrade Mandel once told Art that there was one thing about the Canadian movement – it's developed some excellent lawyers, or something. I don't think Art understood what that meant. When you call a revolutionary a lawyer, it's quite a comment. I think that there was some truth in that, like Comrade Mandel. I've felt that for some the while, our comrades have developed a great legalistic ability. I think it's a sign of the difficulties of the movement. I think that was demonstrated yesterday and in the convention. We suddenly find out there are some really basic differences. Suddenly an important sector of the leadership dissociates itself

from the 1970 document, which it never did before. Never did before. Oh, some formulations, that's all that was ever heard, when I challenged that long ago.

I consider, comrades, our NDP/CCF orientation a very, very basic and fundamental question, and I say advisedly if we dump that orientation I think our movement has no perspective of growth, no perspective of development, that it will not develop, we will not be able to develop a Trotskyist party in this country. I think that's what that says.

The change in the document is very, very simple. Some comrades must have gotten the last page which is blank on the very back, and the inside is full length (it is even over full length). It couldn't go on the stencil, and so we had to re-cut the stencil. And when we re-cut it — 1 re-cut it myself the next day – and put in the little part that the comrade had taken out because of space problems.

But I don't think there is any change in the tone or line of it; by this change in what the content of it is. There was some editing taking place so it would fit on a stencil. Very simple. What's the big difference? You have to explain to me what the big difference is. I think they are essentially the same. They cry out, alarm to the movement. You've got to stop what you are doing, where it's going, or the movement is doomed. I believe that. That sets a certain tension in the debate, of course it does. It is designed to do that. That's exactly what it is designed to do. It's not a threat that the Labor Party Tendency is saying, now we're moving out tomorrow because you haven't changed your view.

The Labor Party Tendency hasn't had a discussion on this part of the recent experience. I would imagine there will be different evaluations of it. I don't know what they will be, but I'm not going to propose, comrades, you can be quite sure, that the Labor Party Tendency withdraw from the League for Socialist Action. You can be quite sure. But I would not be surprised, comrades, there will be some elements who will. Simple fact! Simple fact that there will be some elements who will propose that. As a matter of fact – you just have to face this reality. I would deplore that any comrades would pull out. The Labor Party Tendency is not going to, as far as I'm concerned, identify with anybody or support anybody who would withdraw from the League, but there is this situation. I am sure you are aware of it. I'm surprised you wouldn't be aware of it. I don't know what you anticipate from me.

After the convention this spring, I approached the majority comrades on the Political Committee and asked them, did they wish me to be chairman of the League, because I told them I was considering resigning as chairman after that debate and the character of the debate. I told them I was thinking of resigning and the comrades told me, no, they didn't wish me to resign, so I remained as chairman of the League, but I gave that very serious consideration.

That's not trying to blackmail the League, that's expressing a feeling of incapacity to make a contribution, and I expressed that again tonight I think: a feeling of inability to make a contribution to the development of the movement. A very serious matter. I have that feeling. Of course I gave up the staff post in the movement and I'm now working for a living. That was a very big move on my part, as you can well appreciate. This was an expression on my part that I found myself incapable of working in a harmonious and positive way with the central core of the

leadership of the movement. Of course it was a big move on my part, a very big move on my part. But I didn't make that move light-mindedly. That's where it is. I don't know what you expect of me.

Art Y.: Which is the official version of the LPT document?

Ross Dowson: The official version? Well now, I don't know what the official version would be because of course the one full page section was agreed to by about four comrades, and it was retyped, and it was agreed to by about two comrades. I don't think there is any substantial difference. I don't know what the difference is. You'll have to show me what the great difference is in those two statements. Let me see them.

Well, what's the other one. I have that one. I don't have the other one.

Art Y.: What's the difference?

Ross Dowson: I don't know what you're making such a big point about, because I don't think it's very relevant. That's the same one inside. So what is the big difference? "Young/Riddell document suddenly appeared in the international.. . You want the last paragraph —

Art Y.: No, it's the other side of the page.

Ross Dowson: Well comrades, I don't know what you are talking about — Oh yes, it's the same. It's on both – the last paragraph on this is a re-presentation of the last —

Art Y.: With one additional sentence. The last sentence.

Ross Dowson: And what is the last sentence? "We must note that the direction that the LSA/LSO is moving in on this most important question unleashes a certain dynamic, one which will necessarily lead to a qualitative transformation." Yes if we dump —

Art Y.: No, no, no, no. Read the next sentence. "If the LSA/LSO does not halt this process —"

Ross Dowson: Yes —

Art Y.: "— of abandonment of our NDP orientation, it will cease to be Trotskyist."

Ross Dowson:: Yes!

Art Y.: That's the LPT position?

Ross Dowscn: That's — yes, I wou1d say it is. Abandon(ing) this position is the key question before us. It will cease to be a meaningful Trotskyist movement. That doesn't say that (at this) time, you say, the time is settled; that doesn't say that. That's a warning to the movement; projects a warning to the movement; what we consider the importance of the question. I don't know what the big noise is.

THE SUBVERSION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST ORIENTATION TO THE N.D.P.

a summary document of the
struggle against it – Jan. 1974

How do the as yet relatively small revolutionary socialist forces see themselves being transformed into a vanguard party that could give leadership to the Canadian working class in their struggle to establish a socialist society ?

How the Trotskyists see this process over the next period is outlined in the document Our Orientation to the NDP - the Strategy and its Tactical Application, which was adopted unanimously by their political committee and endorsed without dissent by their united forces in convention in 1970. This document projects the theory, and some historical experiences spanning more than 30 years, which sustain it.

However, just a short two years following its adoption, as the youth radicalization ebbed, this position came under sharp attack. Forces who had only recently come into the movement were soon joined by leaders of the Fourth International who launched a factional attack on the Canadian affiliate.

This attack knocked the majority of the leadership of the united Trotskyist movement off its base. After first ignoring the arguments of their opponents they soon fell into a whole series of shamefaced adaptations and capitulations to their pressure, so that behind the back of the movement and in a series of articles appearing in its public press they violated its longstanding practices.

When these adaptations so emboldened the opposition that a formal stand had to be taken, the majority leadership attempted to short circuit the opposition's attacks by retreating to a gross misinterpretation of established positions.

The document that follows is the summary contribution to this living process by a group of leading activists as they attempted to defend this established position of the movement and who subsequently formed the core of the Socialist League and the contributors to the monthly Forward

While it suffers to some extent from the circumstances of its presentation the following document has the great merit of defending the position outlined in Our Orientation to the NDP - the Strategy and its Tactical Application, in a whole series of very real and concrete circumstances

THE SUBVERSION OF OUR ORIENTATION TO THE NDP

submission to the LSA/LSO plenum by the Labor Party Tendency, January 1974

INTRODUCTION

The Labor Party Tendency has been formed to defend the longstanding orientation of the Canadian Trotskyist movement to the mass labor party formation -the NDP.

As our 1970 document noted, the "NDP is the touchstone of class politics. All working-class politics revolve around it and an incorrect position on it is fatal." Furthermore, it pointed out, our "orientation and its effective application has been the hardest fought position in the history of the movement, established against trends of centrist conciliationism and liquidationism into the NDP, sectarian opposition to the party, and in more recent years spontaneist and adventurist hostility to it, leading to defection from the revolutionary vanguard itself."

Especially in the short period since our 1970 convention, the longstanding Trotskyist concept of the nature and role of the NDP in Canadian politics has come into its own - with the election of three provincial NDP governments . There is the possiblity in the next election of an NDP government in Ontario. What we saw in the youth radicalization is now fusing with and growing in the working class itself. The groundswell of the radicalization has focused attention on the federal NDP as never before.

At the same time, however, the LSA/LSO's orientation is being challenged as never before.

As the NDP appears to be approaching political office on an expanding front, essentially two contradictory processes have begun to work. The electoralist opportunism of the liberal reformist leadership is becoming more obvious to the broader layers of the radicalization. Nevertheless its very successes, and even more, the anticipations of its successes, in a period of relative economic and social stability, have been tending to dull the political perception of the activist layers around the NDP, tending to lead to various forms of acquiesence and abstentionism. As the NDP and its widening periphery becomes more caught up in electoralism and "real" politics - concepts of being part of a wider and more profoundly radical dynamic and process of social change, which the LSA/LSO projects in its orientation, have tended temporarily to be considered to be less relevant within the NDP itself.

While the revolutionary left continues to grow, its rate of growth in relation to the whole radicalization has temporarily declined. Relatively it has become more isolated and become more prone to ultra leftist illusions. Our opponents on the left, the ultra left Canadian Party of Labor, the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), and even the Communist Party of Canada, have stepped up and widened their opposition to the NDP. Important forces of the radicalization, which in 1970 were either in the NDP - coalescing in the Waffle - or orienting to it, have pulled out of the NDP. In the process of defining themselves they have been taking an ultra left stance to the NDP. We now have the Revolutionary Marxist Group, with cross-Canada connections and claiming to be Trotskyist. The RMG has adopted, as one of its distinguishing features in its relations to the LSA/LSO, a sectarian opposition to the NDP. Part of the forces that formed the RMG

came to that group after an all-out assault on our orientation within our movement. Prior to splitting from us they were aided and abetted in this assault by the IEC Majority Tendency.* Instead of opening doors for us, our orientation to the NDP is barring us from the radical left as never before, presenting more challenges and making it more difficult for us to have an impact on it.

But perhaps even more important for us to consider is what our comrades and periphery could have expected from our long and patient NDP work - particularly over the last four years in and around the Waffle. The fact is that the largest left formation to have developed in some 25 years of the Canadian labor party blew up in our faces over the spring and fall of 1972. We proved unable to add any substantial forces to our movement in the course of the Waffle experience as we would have the right to expect.

This long anticipated development of a left wing in the labor party should have provided us with an opportunity for and actually resulted in some growth. If it didn't, for a period we would have expected it to sustain class struggle socialist currents in the labor party. These currents, on the basis of further experience, we would have hoped to win to our orientation and organization.

The Waffle defection did violence to all that we could have expected from our orientation. It has substantially changed the climate in the NDP to the disfavor of left ideas and formations - probably for some time to come. The Waffle did not come in our direction or open up new, if different, possibilities

* International Executive Committee Majority Tendency in the Fourth International - the group representing the positions championed by Ernest Mandel, Livio Maitain, & Pierre Frank

for us. Instead, it is in the process of forming a new party. The exact character of this party is not yet definable, but it is of some socialist or centrist type. It will have considerable dynamic for a whole period because of its line for an independent and socialist Canada.

Among our comrades, ideas and feelings that there is something wrong with our orientation, or our ability to implement it could not help but arise. Because we are serious revolutionaries concerned about building the revolutionary vanguard party, we expect results from our analysis and our work.

NDP ORIENTATION UNDER INTERNAL ATTACK

Moreover the LSA has been going through an intense internal struggle with forces that are challenging our orientation to the NDP. In fact looking back, while problems of the revolution in other areas of the globe have been in the forefront of contention, insofar as differences directly involving Canadian politics and LSA positions are concerned, opposition to our NDP orientation has been uppermost. This opposition within our movement developed in two stages. The first was the Offley-Davis group* which subsequently fused with the Mill group.** This was the Unified Minority Tendency from which the Mill group later withdrew to form the Groupe Marxiste Revolutionnaire. At a later stage the UMT merged into the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, joined in turn by the Horbatiuk-Sinclair-Gandall current.

At the same time, and subsequent to the Waffle-

* LSA leaders in Nova Scotia, who subsequently became leaders in the RMG

**Michel Mill, long-time former member of LSA/LSO, particularly in Quebec

MISC* pull-out from the NDP, the Red Circle formed and moved in our direction. We had running contact with this group in the NDP. They were adopting a hardening critical rejection of the NDP and were calling for an explicitly revolutionary caucus in its ranks. Later they became a component of the RMG. They were joined by the RCT faction when it split from our movement.

The record shows, with considerable clarity, that the central aspect of the disagreement with the UMT/RCT, that the major point of difference directly relevant to the Canadian scene, was our NDP orientation. The record also shows the specific areas of these disagreements. The RCT, Red Circle, Old Mole, and GMR, are now united in the RMG. Differences on the NDP orientation, hitherto limited to our movement and periphery, will now tend to become part of a public debate as the RMG is called upon to explain its existence separate from the LSA/LSO.

These differences have also been projected in the international dispute in the Fourth International. This was signalled by the appearance of the document by Germain called In defence of Leninism: in defense of the Fourth International. The general line of this document forms part of the platform of the IEC Majority Tendency. It is an attempted rubuttal of the Lenin-Trotsky Faction's** claims that the IEC majority is adapting to ultra-left pressures in the new radicalization, with a counter charge that the LTF is adapting to rightist pressures. In this counter-charge the LSA and its orientation to the NDP is being used as

* MISC - - Movement for an Independent and Socialist Canada, the name adopted by Waffle upon leaving the NDP

** Lenin-Trotsky Faction is a current associated with the Fourth International headed by Joseph Hanson and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party.

a foil. This document makes a sweeping attack on the LSA/LSO, charging among other things that "...the position which the LSA/LSO...has adopted towards the reformist social democratic party, the NDP...expresses a clear tailist deviation from Leninism."

Up until recently we can say that our movement has stood on the document titled Our Orientation to the NDP; the Strategy and its Tactical Application. Although there have been many documents on the CCF/NDP, submitted, argued over, and voted upon by various LSA/LSO conventions and plenums - this document is the broadest and most general statement of our view. It was prepared by R. Dowson and presented to the 1970 convention in the name of the Political Committee. It was adopted by the PC, without any dissent, and enthusiastically and unanimously accepted by the convention. This was when the radicalization was already moving into the NDP, as we had predicted it would. This document was understood to not only stand on the diverse work of the past, but to have pulled it all together.

Among the many discussion bulletins circulated for that convention was a special bulletin issued by the LSA/LSO central office. It contained all the major documents on the CCF/NDP that had been adopted by our movement, along with extensive reproductions of key articles from our press. Together these showed the development of our views, which we all considered to culminate in the 1970 document.

Our Orientation to the NDP; the Strategy and its Tactical Application was not put to a vote of the convention. Although we all considered it the definitive general statement of our orientation, it also contained a history of this orientation's development spanning some three decades. We decided it was

not advisable to ask many new and youthful delegates, who could not be familiar with this history, to vote on a document that contained such an amount of historical interpretation. Nevertheless - just three years ago - the 1970 convention delegates and the elected leadership considered this document to be the key statement on our orientation.

It was in this light that the PC submitted it as a contribution to the current international discussion. We were confident that our Canadian experience in dealing with a mass labor party formation would be of value to the world movement. It would be of special value, in our opinion, to any discussion of entry sui generis.*

THE FIRST ATTACK

The first episode in the current dispute in our movement did not take place over the orientation itself as outlined in the 1970 document. It was over its application by Dowson, and Labor Challenge.** It was initiated by the UMT around the controversy that flared up in the New Brunswick NDP.

"The N.B. left, which the Young Socialists have come close to having hegemony over, crumbled," declared Walter Davis in a contribution appearing in Bulletin 26 (Nov. 15/72). The defeat of our movement and its orientation, according to these comrades was "a result of the Labor Challenge and Dowson's tailism."

"The 1971 repression of the N.B. Waffle," Davis wrote, "was led by the united forces of Lewis (leader of the NDP), Watkins (leader of the Waffle), and

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* tactic of entry put forward by Michel Pablo in the early 1950's when he was executive-secretary of the Fourth International

** paper of the LSA

Dowson (executive secretary of the LSA/LSO). The first two stand historically convicted of crimes against the revolution. The last (Dowson) must answer in the future."

Davis also linked "tailism" in N.B. with the LSA's policy toward the Ontario Waffle in the fall of 1972. "The tailism of the leadership caused the LSA to miss important opportunities for adding to the forces of Trotskyism in Canada. How many times will this be the case?" Next the RCT presented a worked-out position in opposition to our orientation to the NDP in The Revolutionary Communist Tendency Position on the NDP. This was submitted by Bret Smiley (Dec. 1/72)

In the opening paragraph we read, "It is characteristic of the eclecticism and pragmatism that substitutes for Marxism in the Canadian section that its quarter century genuflection at the altar of the 'labor party' has yet to be substantiated by a single serious attempt to analyse the main features of the social democratic formation in Canada. It therefore should come as no surprise that, given this theoretical vacuum, the most visible manifestation of the LSA's departure from Leninism politically can be detected in its line and practice with respect to the NDP."

Thus the RCT emphasized as the crucial issue at dispute, our NDP orientation. With this contribution it was not the application of the orientation but the orientation itself. And not accidently, the RCT focused its attack on the 1970 document.

The next sentence quotes from the 1970 document, with minor additions by Bret Smiley. "The orientation to the CCF-NDP (Canadian Section of the Second International - Smiley) has been the fundamental orientation of Canadian Trotskyism since World

War II. In general our position has been one of unconditional (underlined by Smiley) support." He continues on as if the fatal errors in this quotation are self-evident. He asks, "How did this capitulation to reformism come about? After all, the LSA sees itself as a revolutionary organization and at one time acted like one..."

After this material appeared, more appeared on the same theme (Bulletin 29). This was by two leading spokesmen of the RCT, B. Smiley and W. Davis. It was titled Social Democracy and the LSA. This too focused in on the 1970 document. It attacked certain formulations which up until then we had all agreed most succinctly expressed the essence of our orientation. Of necessity, to attack the essence of our orientation, they had to attack the key formulations that expressed that orientation.

This contribution tries to trace what it calls "...the degeneration of the LSA...back to the section's adaptation to the social democratic party which, as the leadership is fond of repeating, constitutes 'the focus of our politics'."

Space and time limits us. We will note the subheads of this document to give an idea of its contents and the areas of disagreement.

Section One is titled "'Labor Party' or 'Social Democracy'". It notes the "...seeming absence of 'social democracy' from the political vocabulary of the Canadian section." They conclude: "To call it (the NDP) anything else is pure opportunism at the theoretical level which we shall see is the essential precondition for the LSA's revisionism politically."

Our movement, its leading spokespersons and its press, have consistently argued against labeling the CCF/NDP social democratic. This flows from our conclusion that, by 1948, the CCF had become a labor party. In a major policy statement, The CCF, Our Tasks and Persepctives*, dated July, 1951, we said: "It is no longer permissible for comrades to attempt to estimate the CCF and let themselves, and the party (we called ourselves the Revolutionary Workers Party at that time) be guided by ready-made formulae such as 'social democratic', 'reformism', 'political support of the bourgeoisie', etc."

There followed an extensive quotation from a letter by Leon Trotsky to our French comrades as to whether these definitions were correct when applied to the French Socialist party in 1934. "Both yes and no," replied Trotsky. "Rather no than yes...the impossibility of applying henceforth a simple customary definition is of itself the unmistakeable expression of the fact that we have to do with a centrist party, which as a consequence of the rapid evolution of the country still retains at its two poles the sharpest contradictions. One would have to be a hopeless scholastic in order to be prevented by the label Second International from seeing what is actually taking place. Only a dialectical definition of the Socialist Party, i.e. above all a concrete appraisal of its internal dynamics can give the Bolshevik-Leninist the possiblity of drawing up a correct perspective and of adopting an active, not a waiting policy."

Following another extensive and relevant statement by Trotsky we continued: "Programmatically the CCF is a right wing Social Democratic (reformist) movement moving further to the right with an internal regime that has become less democratic in the past

*This document was re-issued in 1970 as a key part of the discussion.

year. But its definition doesn't stop there. It only begins. Our definition must be dialectical. 'A concrete appraisal of its internal dynamics' must be made. Such a definition is essential to arrive at a correct orientation. Involved here is not just another working class party, not just a party larger than our own, but the proletariat itself (the class) organized and in the process of being organized. The question: what are the 'internal dynamics of the CCF?' can be equally correctly posed, what are the internal dynamics of the Canadian proletariat?"

Section two is titled "Unconditional Support". It attacks this formulation in the 1970 document

The title of Section Three is again a quote from the 1970 document - "'Our orientation to the NDP, to the labor party, is an orientation to the working class in its process of developing political consciousness'". They attack this concept.

Section four attacks the concept and is titled, "Intervention in the NDP is an intervention in the working class." This is also a long employed formulation.

Section five is titled "Consciousness in stages." This is Davis and Smiley's interpretation of our orientation. Section six "Conclusion: The Road to Reformism." is their idea of where our orientation leads.

Appearing in the same bulletin with the Davis-Smiley document is another by Will Offley. This is titled The Roots of Degeneration. Davis and Smiley tell us that Offley's contribution "...reproduced the main contours of the evolution of the 'labor party' orientation since the late 1940's".

All these UMT, then RCT, attacks on our orientation - all these attacks on the 1970 document and

its major formulations - went by unanswered. All these attacks on our formulations - and they attacked these formulations because they did express the essence of our orientation - went by with little comment by the leadership,. Little or nothing was heard from the leadership in the branches, the Political Committee, or the plenum that fall.

LEADERSHIP DIRECTLY CHALLENGED

Several months before the convention, from a conversation with Marv Gandal, Dowson learned that he (Gandal) was preparing a document on the NDP orientation for the convention. This was before Gandal joined the Revolutionary Communist Tendency and prior to the formation of the United Tendency. It was apparent that this document would be a fundamental attack on our orientation.

Dowson raised this with several members of the leadership pointing out that this attack could not go unanswered. After the failure of these preliminary urgings, at a subsequent Political Committee meeting, he formally proposed that the leadership prepare a document on our orientation in the light of the broadening attacks on it. He proposed that time be allocated in the preconvention discussion, and on the convention agenda, for a discussion of our NDP orientation. The proposal was rejected - only Dowson voted for.

A few months later Stu Sinclair, a PC member who had become an RCT supporter, moved a motion on the PC that the majority present a resolution to the convention on the LSA's NDP orientation. By this time Gandal had become an RCTer and his document an RCT line document. Sinclair's motion, also asked that time be allotted to this question on the convention agenda. This too was rejected, with only Sinclair

voting for it. Dowson abstained, with a statement that in principle he was completely in agreement that such a document and discussion were necessary. But on the eve of the convention he did not see how it was now possible. There was too little time left for its preparation, discussion on the PC, and presentation to the preconvention discussion.

It should be noted that other comrades were also concerned about the attacks on our orientation. The United Tendency in its first declaration, March 16, included as point three, "We stand on the theory and practice of our movement, with regards to the NDP, expressed in the document 'Our Orientation to the NDP; the Strategy and its Tactical Application' (1970); the document 'The NDP and the Waffle' adopted by the 1971 plenum, and our practice with regards to the NDP and the Waffle up to the summer of 1972." Subsequently, in its appeal for delegated representation, the UT set aside this point to concentrate on the other two points of its platform. These were: (1) that the LSA/LSO should recognize the new nationalism that has arisen, due to the US takeover, as essentially progressive and link up with it; and (2) support of the international minority tendency (now the Lenin Trotsky Faction-LTF) and its platform of three planks to be advanced at the next world congress.

Gandal's document, by now an RCT line document, appeared three weeks before the convention (Bulletin 44, April 9). While the UT set aside the question of the NDP from its platform, two UT comrades contributed documents on the question. One was Harry Knight's contribution (Bulletin 54) titled The Collapse of our NDP work in Ontario and some lessons for the future. The other was by R. Dowson called Theory is Gray but Life is Green (Bulletin 40, April 1).

This latter document is largely a response to a contribution from prominent supporters of the majority, Whitton and Dupont. They held the position that it was the nationalism of the Waffle, which they characterized as bourgeois and reactionary, that led it to break from the NDP (class politics). In keeping with the view widely expressed by the majority leadership both in debate and in our press, Dupont claimed that the Waffle "is running into the arms of the bourgeoisie." They warned us that "comrades who do not want to follow the Waffle's footsteps should learn from its mistakes."

Theory is Gray But Life is Green attributed the majority leadership's failure to come to grips with Waffle as it was moving out of the NDP, to its reversal in its appreciation of the nature of the Waffle and its nationalism. This nationalism was suddenly discovered to be bourgeois and reactionary and the reason for the Waffle's break from the NDP. Dowson also claimed that instead of applying our strategic orientation to the NDP, the majority leadership had made a fetish out of the NDP. "This making a principle of staying in the NDP" at all costs, behind a Stay and Fight Campaign, when it was clear that Waffle was pulling the viable left out of the NDP, said Dowson, "has nothing in common with our long-standing practice with regards to the NDP." We had to consider the advisability of going out of the NDP with the left, for a period.

CHALLENGED...AND EVASION

This contribution, an attempt to discuss the application of our orientation, belatedly to be sure, won a flippant rejoinder from Comrade Fidler on the eve of the convention (Bulletin 52) It would appear that for factional purposes Fidler decided to present himself as the defender of the orientation against Dowson. He

asked "does Dowson want us to 'lay aside' our orientation?"

The contribution by Harry Knight (Bulletin 54), which came out late and was probably not assimilated by the movement, explains the phenomenon observed by Germain and used in his attack on the Canadian section. This was the failure of Labor Challenge (September 17/72) to differentiate itself from the NDP brass - made all the more necessary by the brass's assault on the mass left wing formation of the Waffle. Germain was unable to explain the absence of a critical attitude to the NDP leadership. It's ABC, he said, "Obviously it is as ABC for the leadership of the LSA as well," he conceded.

However, Knight explained this error of the LSA leadership. He outlined the PC majority record of what he called "... their zigzags and their adaptation both to the left and to the right." In the left caucus, he records how we tailed the politics of the Red Circle. And "as a byproduct of the PC majority's mission against Waffle's supposed cop-out on socialism in favor of nationalism, of which there is not a shred of evidence,...we see the euphoric lapses in our press, the muting of our criticism of the NDP leadership, which cannot be explained in any other context."

In the face of the long all-out assault on the NDP orientation, the PC majority leadership remained absolutely silent - except for the contribution by Dick Fidler. This (Bulletin 52) appeared as the delegates gathered at the convention site. While called In Defence of the Orientation to the NDP its title is obviously and unmistakeably a misnomer. Fidler makes this clear in his introductory remarks.

After four paragraphs of speculative and superci-lious jabs at the UT, he turns to the issue. "The

comrades of the RCT, for their part, pose a much more explicit challenge to our perspective. The RCT has produced extensive documentation with wide ranging criticisms of formulations which have been used in the past to describe our NDP orientation. They raise some important questions about our record in applying the orientation." Then he turns away from the issue with his declaration that "...these are not the key questions before the membership of the League in this preconvention discussion."

Fidler bypasses the RCT polemics against our orientation by going "behind" the polemics - to what he calls their concept of party building. "Behind the RCT's polemics, there lies a fundamentally different view of revolutionary politics. The RCT's main tactical projection with respect to the NDP - the building of a 'revolutionary' caucus in the party - is directly counterposed to our conception of the basic thrust of our intervention, the building of class struggle caucuses within the labor party which focus on the key political issues of the day."

The entire 17 pages of this document deal almost exclusively with 'Revolutionary Caucus' or 'Left Caucus'. Thus the orientation itself is approached only in an elliptical way. There is no defence here against the RCT's "...wide ranging criticisms of formulations..." It is as if there was no connection whatsoever between these formulations and the essence of the line they expressed. He makes no attempt to answer the RCT's "... questions about our record in applying our orientation." It is as if our record was not related to the orientation itself.

RCT LAYS DOWN THE LINE

Gandal's RCT line document against our NDP orientation concludes with a ten point summary. We

will examine some of the salient points to show the totality of their rejection of our orientation and their understanding of the interrelationship between what Fidler calls the "formulations used to describe the orientation" and the orientation itself.

Point one rejects our concept that the NDP is a labor party. They characterize the NDP as a "social democratic labor party...It is not 'in the way and on the way' to the socialist revolution, it is just in the way--plain and simple." Point two declares "the NDP is not the 'focus of our politics'...The NDP is merely an important work area."

The next three points challenge our line on the NDP for being posed as a principle "because it is the class party and it does not matter whether we are (actually) in the party or not--it is the focus of our politics." The NDP, according to point four, "must be treated tactically." In point five they say "endorsing it might depend on an assessment of whether an NDP electoral victory would accelerate or retard the class struggle."

Point six insists "we demonstrate that we support this party grudgingly, reluctantly, that the emphasis is on 'critical' rather than 'support'. We do not sing the praises of the NDP nor do we set 'NDP to power' or 'Vote NDP' in screaming headlines which betray a certain inappropriate enthusiasm on the front page of the press." It insists that "we quite clearly explain 'in a popular manner' that we support this party as a rope supports the hanged..."

Point seven demands that "Our press and cadre always should emphasize that the NDP exists to repress and betray the class struggle and to rationalize the capitalist system. That is its primary function. To the extent it is 'responsive' to mass movements, it responds to deflect and defuse them. To the extent

that it has 'progressive' features, it is significantly no more progressive than the most enlightened wing of the bourgeoisie. The election of NDP governments in B.C., Manitoba and Saskatchewan provides excellent opportunities to provide graphic running commentaries on the bankruptcy of social-democratic reformism."

Point eight attacks another formulation of the 1970 document. "The slogan 'Win the NDP to Socialism' should be dropped since the NDP cannot be won to socialism. Revolutionaires do not blatantly deceive the masses and promote such gross illusions."

Point nine challenges us to intervene "... and in the labor party with the purpose of presenting the full program." Point ten counterposes expulsions from the NDP as being "preferable to"--what the RCT alleges the LSA has been practising in the NDP --"liquidation of the revolutionary program and underground isolation at all costs."

From the record it is an unchallengeable fact that while it was under this sustained all-down-the-line assault, the leadership did not defend the longstanding orientation of the Canadian Trotskyists to the NDP. This alone could not help but weaken the understanding of the LSA's ranks and undermine their confidence in our orientation. This danger was all the greater as the attack from within, carried by the RCT, was but a reflection and a supplement to the attack on our orientation from outside by all our opponents on the left.

THE PLACE OF THE POLITICAL RESOLUTION

There was no NDP document and the discussion was restricted to the political resolution which at-

tempted to encompass a wide ranging series of problems confronting the movement. The section on the NDP in the Political Resolution titled the NDP and the Crisis of Leadership was quite limited. It had nothing to say on what Fidler recognized as "...wide ranging criticisms of formulations which have been used in the past to describe the NDP orientation." Despite the extensive documentation of the RCT, it didn't touch on what Fidler described as "...important questions about our record in applying our orientation." Among these "important questions" were charges of tailism and of liquidation into social democratic reformism! Because it ignored these "wide ranging criticisms" and "important questions" the Political Resolution and its section on the NDP were completely irrelevant to the problems confronting the LSA/LSO.

Can a revolutionary socialist cadre organization remain silent before the charges of tailism and capitulation to reformism, which are flung at it from a sizeable current within its own ranks? These charges cannot be dismissed as factional excesses. The RCT tried to document them and motivate them on the basis of political analysis. It is hard to conceive of a leadership nurtured on Trotskyism, so fond of quoting Cannon, remaining silent under such circumstances. The fact is, however, they did remain silent.

There were no discussions of any significance at any official level of the movement on how to combat this assault. No discussion to make any assessment of it, to determine whether it was completely false or had any substance that might require us to redefine some aspects of our orientation. But though the Central Office leadership remained silent, they were not unaffected by this all-out two-year attack on our orientation.

RETREATS AND ADAPTS

Aside from Fidler's narrowly defined contribution, the only evidence of the thinking of the CO leadership is the Political Resolution. It has another notable aspect besides its irrelevance to the key problem confronting the LSA/LSO, which was posed by the UMT and the RCT, that is, the Political Resolution is as clean as a hound's tooth of all the formulations which so offended the RCT'. Gone are all the formulations that they demanded should be dropped'. We look in vain for "labor party," "in the way and on the way," "the focus of our politics -- even when it is not the centre of our work," "unconditional support," "intensive fraction work with a non-split perspective," "strategic orientation," "Win the NDP to Socialism," etc.

When the RCT demanded that these formulations be dropped, they motivated their demand. As we showed previously, they locked these formulations right into the line. They were demanding that we drop the longstanding line of the movement. According to their view the terminology was not accidental. They were not to be satisfied with new words and new phrases. They weren't looking for some new expression of the same fundamental strategic orientation that might better describe more subtle aspects of it or different nuances of it. According to them the terminology in the 1970 document very accurately and succinctly expressed the line -- how it should be, and had been, practised by the cadres of the LSA/LSO over the years.

The Political Resolution contains a very general, largely historical and descriptive presentation of our orientation. It answers none of the charges levelled by the RCT and it drops, not just one or two but all the offending formulations of the 1970 document. It does this without any explanation to the membership.

We would gather that, although they once thought that these formulations did accurately express our line, the authors of the Political Resolution must have changed their minds. On closer examination, and in the light of experience, they have concluded that these formulations really have little, if anything at all, to do with the essential line -- in either its expression or its practice. It appears in fact, that they must have concluded that these formulations have only served to expose the line and make it vulnerable to the attack of the ultra-left RCT. So . . .to defend the line, the formulations must be dumped!

However, we can only speculate. We were not, and have not yet been told the reasons. None of the offending formulations that appeared in the 1970 document appear in the 1973 Political Resolution. We note in passing that the Political Resolution was edited between its appearance in draft form for the pre-convention discussion, and its publication in Labor Challenge (July 23/73.) In its preconvention form it described the NDP as a "labor party". In the final, edited version the words "labor party" are replaced by the words "Social Democratic labor party." At another place where the draft read "Revolutionary Marxists give support to the NDP as the elementary class alternative..." the final version now reads "...give critical support..." (our emphasis).

The formulations have been dropped -- but has the line been changed? Around the time of the formation of the LPT, many of the comrades involved had noted a recurring tendency in the movement. Many comrades had taken on the practice, when referring to the NDP, of no longer calling it a labor party, but rather of referring to it as a quote/unquote/labor party. It had

become increasingly prevalent to replace the term labor party altogether, by the designation social democratic party. Many comrades were objecting to the use of the term "unconditional" in describing our strategic and long-range orientation to the NDP. Some objected to saying we "support" the NDP. They wanted to emphasize that, on the contrary, we oppose the NDP, period. Although this did not figure high in our thinking, its prevalence made us uneasy and we will return to this problem of terminology.

What struck us particularly, following the convention, was the change in Labor Challenge. In the LPT founding statement we said "since the convention a whole series of important articles relating to different aspects of the NDP and our work have been published in our press. These articles show a clear trend towards a sectarian revision of our longstanding strategic orientation, in our opinion, and, in their totality, constitute an abandonment of our orientation to the mass labor party."

LABOR CHALLENGE RECORD

We will now show the magnitude of the break with our NDP orientation by recent articles appearing in Labor Challenge. We have chosen four episodes which we think are sufficient to establish our point. This was an arbitrary choice. A full and detailed analysis would fill volumes dealing with almost every issue.

In order to appreciate the enormity of the break we will recall a few aspects of our orientation. Our position of unconditional and critical support to the Canadian labor party is based on our understanding that in this whole period the NDP represents, in general, an advance in the rising political consciousness of the Canadian working class. To pull cadres together, to build the revolutionary vanguard party, it is necessary,

through our transitional concept of politics to address ourselves to the working class. As the 1970 document put it, "the NDP remains the focus of all our politics" -- even when it is not "the centre of our activities." The NDP is not just another working-class party. It is the concrete expression of independent labor political action at the present general level of the class struggle. The NDP reflects, focuses and advances the consciousness of the working class. We have to participate in this process.

Our propaganda must be based on an understanding of the level of consciousness of the class and the real viability of its present political unity and development. We cannot criticize the NDP solely from the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism. But we must primarily prove our case against the reformists by exposing their treachery when it involves some matters of the gravest concern to the masses. Such an approach requires an activist intervention in the organizations and struggles of the class and is dynamically counterposed to the fundamentalist critics who expound their views as so much dogma, from the sidelines of the working class and their organizations.

At this time we are a tiny revolutionary grouping. To grow into a party, we must employ our understanding of the realities of the class struggle to put forward demands or solutions that appear practical and are necessary to the working class. We direct ourselves to its understanding and its needs. We orient ourselves to its mass labor party. We fight for transitional and democratic demands in and around the NDP. We criticize, oppose, and seek to destroy the influence of the reformist leadership. We fight the reformists in order to break their hegemony over the politicizing layers of the working class in the NDP and to break their influence on the class as a whole.

Our tactics flow out of this interventionist strategy. We cannot pretend that the NDP leadership never take generally correct positions -- if it never did, how would one account for its influence over the class? When the NDP leadership take progressive positions they speak to the workers' immediate needs. When they take reactionary positions they speak to their own interests as a privileged bureaucratic apparatus, as petit-bourgeois reformists temporarily at the helm of the workers movement. We pose the socialist alternative sensitively and intransigeantly. We have nothing in common with the testamentary politics of sectarians. Has Labor Challenge adhered to this orientation?

We will examine Labor Challenge's coverage of the concept of the Women's Ministry in British Columbia. In the September 10, 1973 issue there appeared an article on the women's ministry which constituted a 180 degree about turn, a complete reversal of the previous position that appeared in several articles in Labor Challenge less than a year earlier. Even more important, this September 10 article constituted an undocumented, complete reversal of our line designed explicity to meet the very problems posed by such a demand that had been adopted by the 1971 summer plenum of the Central Committee of the LSA.

The September 10 article titled "Diversion for Feminists -- Women's Ministry" (ostensibly a review of a recent publication of the BC NDP Women's Committee) deals with the demand that the BC NDP government establish a Women's Ministry. This demand was passed as a resolution by the November 24-26, 1972 BC NDP convention.

Curiously, this article completely reverses our original support for this demand without explanation.

In the December 11, 1972 issue of Labor Challenge, an article dealing with the BC convention titled "Women Press Struggle in BC NDP" asserted:

"A question of key importance posed by the convention was: Who makes the political decisions in the NDP? This issue emerged most clearly around the passage of a resolution calling for a Ministry of Women's Affairs to be established in their first sitting of the Legislature. The debate on the ministry was the highlight of the convention."

The article continues in the same vein: "The resolution was passed by a solid majority ... But in spite of the firm decision taken by the convention Premier Barrett informed the press that the ministry would be very low in his government's priority list. It is clear that what Barrett and other right wing NDP cabinet ministers object to is not the proposal for a women's ministry itself, but the thrust of the struggle and program behind this proposal... The Barrett leadership ...does not want to yield an inch to the radical dynamic behind the NDP convention call for a women's ministry..."

And it concludes in its summary paragraph: "What are the most immediate tasks before the socialist Left of the BC NDP? The left is challenged to give leadership to those forces seeking to assert the right of the party to control its legislative caucus, especially around the demand for a Ministry of Women...."

Our original position of all-out support of this demand carried on into subsequent issues of Labor Challenge -- for instance an article in the March 5, 1973 issue. In that article, reporting the occupation by militants of a child-care project administered by a "Social Credit-appointed government bureaucracy"

we stated that "many NDPers who supported the demands of the occupation say that this spotlighted once again the need for a ministry of women's rights. Such a ministry, if it were rooted in women's groups across the province, would bring enormous pressure to bear on the (NDP) government to meet its responsibilities to women and to carry out NDP policy in this area."

In sharp contradiction to all our previous statements of support of the demand for a women's ministry, the article that appeared in the September 10, 1973 issue of Labor Challenge characterizes the campaign for a women's ministry as a "diversion for feminists," as "a false course for the (NDP) women's rights committee." The concept of a women's ministry which Labor Challenge said in our March 5 issue "would bring enormous pressure to bear on the NDP government," Labor Challenge now says "tends to ease the pressure on the government to enact specific reforms of benefit to women. In this sense it lets Barrett, Trudeau and company off the hook." How "Trudeau and company" are "let off the hook" is not clarified.

That the September 10 article is a complete reversal of our position on the women's ministry is not so much as mentioned, let alone explained to the readers of Labor Challenge. Labor Challenge has reconsidered and dumped our previous viewpoint. Few members of the LSA/LSO are even aware that the public position of the movement has been changed. There has been no circular to that effect and there has been no documentation for the education of our comrades.

When the delegates passed the resolution for a women's ministry a year ago, it is quite clear that we saw it as an anti-bureaucratic move of considerable importance. The convention previously had passed a whole series of resolutions on equal pay legislation, allocations of funds

for, and the structuring of, child-care facilities -- in fact, almost our entire body of women's liberation demands insofar as we were able to develop them in resolution form. The resolution on the ministry capped it all off.

It was a demand that the NDP parliamentary caucus carry out the will of the delegates who had been voting in line with resolutions passed by the rank and file of the movement. The resolution expressed a profound unease as to the willingness of the liberal-reformist brass, in the face of bourgeois opposition, to implement the will of the party ranks.

That's how we saw the resolution in 1972 -- that it posed "a question of key importance" -- "who makes the political decisions in the NDP" -- and that's how Barrett himself saw it, according to our 1972 coverage.

"Barrett, speaking to the convention itself, stressed that although the delegates set policy, the party's 'political arm' -- the government -- has the right to decide which of their policies should be implemented. This statement rightly disturbed many delegates since it implied that the role of the membership is purely advisory and that membership decisions in convention have no force or meaning. The need to establish the democratic right of the party membership to control the decision making of the NDP will be the focus of an important struggle in the party in the next period."

How different is that interpretation of the 1972 resolution from the interpretation that is presented in a slighting, passing, and matter-of-tact -- not to speak of a totally false -- way in the September 1973 article. "The resolution did not demand that the government enact any new legislation. It did not demand that the government do anything other than set up another ministry which it explicitly described as being integrated into the existing bureaucratic framework of the government and state apparatus."

What happened within the year that caused Labor Challenge to make one evaluation of the women's ministry demand, sustained by the events out of which it arose in the fall of 1972, and to comment on it in such a totally different way in the process of reviewing a pamphlet almost a year later?

Were there some new and important developments in the interval that caused us to reconsider our previous evaluation of the significance of the demand? Was it co-opted by the right wing brass? Did events so unfold as to make a once fighting demand into a substitute for ongoing struggles around concrete issues confronting women activists? Did it become a diversion from mass action into maneuverings and dickerings in the parliamentary arena?

A careful reading of the September 1973 article reveals it to be notably lacking even in so much as a suggestion that circumstances surrounding the demand for a women's ministry are involved.

Nor does the fact that Labor Challenge devotes an entire page to the question nine months after the demand was passed suggest that the demand was based largely on conjunctural circumstances and what we said was its chief significance, that it posed "who makes political decisions in the NDP."

In fact, with the protests around the BC NDP government's labor legislation that split this month's convention down the middle, it would appear that what we have said lay behind the women's ministry that "the need to establish the democratic right of the party membership to control the decision-making of the NDP will be the focus of an important struggle in the party in the next period" has become a matter of increasing importance.

The September 1973 article, when you probe further

into it -- since it sticks to commentina on two speeches in support of the demand that were delivered eight and nine months ago at the same time as we were establishing our position of support of the demand, indirectly affirms that the actual circumstances srrounding the development of the demand are irrelevant. It suggests, although it is not said explicitly, that something more is involved, that up until September 1973 we ourselves were guilty of making an error of much greater significance, although it does not actually characterize the nature of the error.

In order to try to use Yandle and Corrigal as a foil to justify a change in our line, the September 1973 article has to resort to such argumentative methods as saying that "Yandle and Corrigal imply..." that "they seem to view" ...that their "approach... which could disarm" ... etc., etc.

The pamphlet that the September 1973 article polemicizes against is an effective presentation of the views that we ourselves expressed just eight and nine months ago. However one of the articles (Yandle's), as the September 1973 article makes special note of, is titled "A Ministry of Women's Rights -- a structural solution." It would seem that this phrase, "a structural solution", is of considerable importance. It is, therefore, useful to quote Yandle at some length in order to understand what she really said in her written speech of some months ago, and how at variance with reality Labor Challenge's handling of this is.

Yandle explains what she means by the phrase "the problem is a structural problem and therefore the solution must be structural as well." A considerable portion of this article is devoted to making the point that the problems confronting women in capitalist society, as she herself summarizes "are not accidental by-products of the system but are completely and inseparably part

of the system." Refreshingly, and obviously a reflection of the profoundly radical impact that women's liberation is having on the NDP, Yandle attributes all the major ills of the day to the fact that society is "based on a capitalist economy" and scores liberal reformists for not recognizing that poverty, etc, are "not going to be eliminated without making some very fundamental changes in the system of things." In summarizing this section she writes: "The way to begin to correct this is systematically to change and, if necessary, dismantle those institutions that now perpetuate inequality and oppression and to substitute for them new, socialist institutions."

Having dealt with the problem in general, Yandle moves onto the question of the Ministry of Women's Rights, and how she personally sees it.

"The first thing to understand about the Ministry is that the idea was not conceived in the head of a bureaucrat, or by anyone concerned with channeling the women's movement into a bureaucracy. Nor was it conceived as a substitute for the women's movement. The idea first came from the NDP Women's Committee itself; it was seen not as a panacea for every ill, but as a means to begin the task of breaking down the structural inequality that women face."

Finally, in the summary she likens the demand to those which "we as socialists argue for in relation to the labor movement - the right to strike, the shorter work week, the removal of repressive laws -- none of these things is designed to replace the labor movement." So "the Ministry of Women's Rights is not proposed as a substitute for organizing to change these institutions. Neither is it a crutch to lean on or a structure to hide behind."

Having emphasized the possibilities she hopes

reside in the demand, Yandle mentions "some of the things a Ministry cannot do. A Ministry cannot take the place of women organizing. A ministry will not end the social inequality of women. No significant social change is ever made by government decree alone unless that decree reflects what is already happening in society at large and is thus the reflection of a larger movement."

Since it is apparent that Yandle in her views as expressed in the reviewed pamphlet -- and we are referred to no others -- in no way sees the women's ministry as a substitute to struggle for concrete policies which meet women's needs, as Labor Challenge's September 1973 article says is necessary; since it is apparent that Yandle in no way sees (from her written views) the ministry as a substitute for mass action to involve masses of women who have not yet taken action and to pressure the labor movement to actively support these campaigns, as Labor Challenge's September 1973 article says is necessary; and since it is apparent that she is by no means opposed (but from her written views, quite the contrary) to demands that the Barrett government set up abortion clinics, become a model as an employer of women workers, etc., etc., then what does it actually mean to end up as the September 1973 article does with the ringing cry that the women's rights committee must spearhead campaigns demanding concrete legislation now, and "reject the dead end strategy proposed by Yandle and Corrigal"?

To the average reader of the September 1973 article, LC's attack (on the views of Yandle and Corrigal as they are expressed in the pamphlet that we have polemicized against) can only appear to be essentially unprincipled, dogmatic, sectarian and factional, besides being a quite unintelligible attack on the concept of a Women's Ministry which up until

that moment we ourselves quite fully supported.

Does the Women's Ministry demand, contrary to our understanding of it last December, represent "a false course", as our September 1973 article now claims? On the basis of all the evidence presented in the September 1973 article we cannot by any means conclude that it does. It is an anti-bureaucratic demand, a formulation of the determination of the membership of a labor party formation that they, and the policies that their delegates formulate in convention, should determine the policies of the leadership of that labor party formation in parliamentary office.

A question remains -- what is meant by "the dead-end strategy" allegedly proposed by leading BC NDP women activists Yandle and Corrigal? We have presented the substance of what they wrote on what is suggested to be an extremely significant phrase in their characterization of the ministry -- that it is a "structural solution". We have no cause to differentiate ourselves from how this phrase is explained in Yandle's summary paragraph -- the full realization of women's goals "will not be achieved until this society is fundamentally changed, until we change these structures and institutions of our society and economy that lock us into our present situation."

In fact, in characterizing the LSA's attitude to the NDP in government, in the report titled The NDP and the Waffle submitted to and adopted by a plenum of the Central Committee of the LSA/LSO in the summer of 1971, we strongly identify with Yandle's approach of structural solutions in the NDP government. On page 32 of the bulletin containing that report we affirm, in opposition at that time, not to the editors of Labor Challenge, but to Manitoba Wafflers, that:

"We, on the other hand, aim to bring all the mass movements to bear upon the NDP governments, to make those governments not substitutes for the mass movements, but powerful supplements. Where it is in office, the NDP should be challenged to put the resources of the state machinery (our emphasis) at the service of those movements, to build their campaigns and to implement their demands to the fullest extent possible.

"As the abortion campaign in Manitoba demonstrates, these NDP regimes are very vulnerable to mass pressures from the left. In many cases, all we have to do is mount a campaign, it is not necessary to urge the government to actually violate the criminal code. (Our emphasis.) We can simply pressure it to use its control of provincial hospitals, in accordance with the tribunals required under existing federal law -- ..."

By means of this strategic approach of intervening within the NDP (of putting demands on the NDP government) and through the pressure of the mass feminist movement, we caused the anti-abortion forces to back down in Manitoba. The impact of this strategy was devastatingly revealed in the way in which the Schreyer government was forced to dissassociate itself from the notorious anti-abortionist Borowski, ultimately leading to Borowski's resignation from the cabinet.

In reference to the question of how Marxists should approach the question of the state in relation to structural solutions, there is one paragraph in the September 1973 Labor Challenge article, inserted at the bottom of the second column from the end, that requires comment.

This paragraph, addressing itself to feminists, tells them that they must understand that the state apparatus

cannot be taken over by women, in reference we must suppose, to a ministry in the parliamentary apparatus of a bourgeois state -- that this will not alter the basic character of the state as an instrument of class oppression and exploitation. The state, the September 1973 article notes "must be replaced in the process of a revolutionary transformation of society, a socialist revolution."

All of this is very true, but how relevant is it to the question before us? Is this paragraph a hint to our readers? Is it possible that Labor Challenge is trying to suggest that when all is said and done the demand for a women's ministry is a violation of principle? Are we suggesting that to support such a demand betrays a profound ignorance of the state as an instrument of class oppression and fosters the most dangerous illusions, that the demand of itself and in itself is totally false?

Are the editors of Labor Challenge stating, by implication, that the 1971 Plenum document's position of challenging the NDP to put the resources of the state machinery at the service of movements such as the Women's liberation movement is false and illusory as well?

In the 1971 report the Central Committee characterized such challenges, an abstentionist criticism. Is Labor Challenge now stating that such a position entails the betrayal of revolutionary principle?

It may well be that Yandle and Corrigal have some illusions as to the nature of the state, although they have the profoundly radical understanding that women's oppression is structured right into society and that profoundly radical understanding that there is a need for totally new structures. They may think that the structuring of the new socialist society can take

place on some progressive piecemeal basis of restructuring the old capitalist apparatus. If they hold this view, it is by no means clear from their written words in the pamphlet under review. And, even if it were so, it is debatable that we would use this occasion to take them to task in this matter.

Above all, what have such illusions got to do with the position that we Trotskyists took of support for a women's ministry almost a year ago, which LC dumped surreptitiously in this same article? We had then, and we have now, no illusions whatsoever about the need, in order to lay the basis for the structures of the new society, to smash the bourgeois state institutions. Our position was not based on any illusions about the state but on an understanding of the political situation in British Columbia, on the level of the class struggle, on the relationship of class forces, on the role of the labor party in this struggle. The demand expresses the objective needs of the class. It flows out of their present level of consciousness and takes them forward in struggle, on this occasion, against the reformist bureaucracy that is in office in the parliamentary apparatus of the BC sector of the Canadian bourgeois state.

While it is essential that we Trotskyists acquaint those who will listen with the broad historic experiences of the past -- with Marxist theory -- particularly with the Marxist theory of the state, the masses are going to learn about it, the need to smash it and to build new forms useful to them, in the process of making demands, particularly on those who they think represent them but who cower before the necessary surgery. The illusions of the masses are going to be dispelled by experience.

The Central Committee emphasized the importance of the workers' experience in learning this lesson

about the state in the 1971 Plenum report (page 32):

"We should welcome this development (of an NDP government) without reservations; the governmental experience is the best possible experience we can have with the NDP -- not because the NDP, under its present leadership will establish an anti-capitalist workers' government, but because the Canadian workers, will only overcome their reformist illusions by seeing in action the total inadequacies of social democracy. But whether the advanced layers of the class succeed in drawing the correct conclusions from their experiences depends on the intervention of the revolutionary socialists, and our ability to consolidate and build, in the course of the struggle, with the reformists, a mass revolutionary alternative to the reformists..."

But to build a revolutionary alternative means to be able to influence and associate ourselves with the most radical and democratic elements within the NDP who are beginning to draw essentially correct conclusions about the nature of the class struggle. We cannot succeed in this endeavor by falsely pointing an accusing finger of reformist illusions (or making vague innuendos leading in that direction) to such promising elements. Instead, we should develop a friendly and serious attitude to such elements and attempt to present to them a rounded appreciation of our NDP orientation.

By our giving critical support to the NDP, while we continue to project the need to build the revolutionary vanguard party and even declare that support, the more effectively to pull together the nucleus of such a party, sectarians and dogmatists accuse us of promoting illusions about the NDP. In calling for the NDP to power, to parliamentary office, essentially the illusion of power which in reality resides in the bourgeoisie's control of the means of production and

the multitudinous forms of the state rule, sectarians and dogmatists accuse us of promoting illusions about the nature of parliament. But the illusions are already there and our course is designed to rid the masses of their illusions about parliament and the state. It is by placing demands on the NDP government that the workers in BC are going to learn both the nature of the NDP, and NDP government, and the bourgeois state. That is the essence of our transitional concept.

These are the concepts that Labor Challenge (September 10 issue) dumped, in its reversal of the Central Committee's clear and unequivocal position that was in harmony with our longstanding strategic orientation to the NDP.

MANITOBA ELECTIONS

How has Labor Challenge adhered to our strategic orientation in the Manitoba election coverage? We refer to Volume 4, No. 10, 11 and 12. In this series of articles Labor Challenge dealt with the NDP as an opponent political organization which we could not be said to support in any serious way. It did not deal with the NDP in the framework of our orientation and our understanding of its contradictory character. Labor Challenge attacked both the campaign, and the NDP as a political party, in the framework of abstract support and concrete massive criticism.

Coming into the election, the editors of Labor Challenge made a withering attack on the NDP government. They paid no heed to the realities of the NDP's slim parliamentary majority, as if this was not a matter of special concern to workers at a time of an election. They gave only slighting and grudging recognition to the positive legislation that the NDP government had actually passed.

In the lead article of the June 25th issue, Labor Challenge ridiculed "the very modest reforms it

legislated in the preceeding four years" and their extension such as sewers, waterworks, free denticare from birth to age twelve, and government fire insurance. It dismissed the impact that it is having in the rural areas through "policies aimed at preserving small towns and family farms." These of course are among the most serious concerns of the working masses and are a key to their radicalization.

We must ask: to whom was Labor Challenge addressing itself? We can say for sure that it wasn't speaking to the consciousness of the class. This article didn't provide us a hearing in the NDP either, which is the "focus of our politics". Perhaps it was intended to prove to Comrade Germain that we are not tailists, and thus we end up addressing ourselves to the particular concerns of the "vanguard".

In another article the editors wrote: "Schreyer and his NDP government have made strenuous efforts to placate business interests during their four years in office. . . Big Business defines the election, inaccurately, as a contest between free enterprise. . . and socialism . . . the NDP's program no more represents socialism than the other parties favor free enterprise . . ." This scorn and ridicule of the NDP and Big Business's very real opposition to it -- of which the Canadian workers are very much aware -- is qualified by an interesting innovation used to characterize the NDP. The editors state that the NDP is supportable only in that it is "ultimately responsible to the labor movement." Heretofore we have characterized the NDP as being "labor-based" which defines its essential class character, its significance, despite its leadership and program, and that is why we are oriented to it. With this new formulation Labor Challenge's message to NDP present and future supporters in this election was that the only progressive significance of the NDP is not its present, but only in

its "ultimate" responsibility to their interests. Support of the NDP was presented as defensible only on broad historical grounds, solely on what we alleged it posed, symbolically, and not on the record of anything at all that it has done, or that it actually projects that might be in the interests of the working class. The implications of this new formulation are, to say the least, somewhat questionable and certainly a step away from our heretofore precise concepts.

In a subsequent paragraph in the same article Labor Challenge alleged that the "NDP regime in Manitoba is administering capitalism, helping to make the system run better for the businessmen." We assume that Labor Challenge was not alleging that this is the aim of the NDP leadership. Their fatal flaw is that they think the interests of the workers are not diametrically opposite to those of the capitalist class -- the real rulers (not parliament) of the system -- and think that an extensive network of social reforms, even socialism, can be realized through accumulative reforms of capitalism. Unfortunately the working class also shares these illusions, promoted fundamentally by the capitalist class and their Liberal and Tory ideologues. It is because the NDP is not "helping to make the system run better for businessmen" that "Big Business" quite clearly and unmistakeably opposes the NDP, even somewhat hysterically sometimes, when they define, as Labor Challenge previously noted, the election "as a contest between free enterprise and socialism."

The article continued in this way onto page four where we were told that the "key challenge is how to use the opportunity presented by the election to develop the struggle against big business domination." Up until now we have assumed that the electoral struggle and victory for the labor party is a struggle against big business domination and at that juncture

was a key one. Did the editors of Labor Challenge consider that mass action was the only key challenge at the time of the Manitoba election?

How can these articles be said in any way to adhere to our well worked out orientation to the NDP -- an orientation which neither gives anything to reformism, but does not ignore its hold either?

The coverage in Volume 4, No. 11, in our second issue on the election, abandoned a key concept of our strategic orientation to the NDP. The key to placing our unconditional and critical support in an understandable context has always been not to make an identity of the liberal-reformist leadership with the labor party itself. We never conceded the party to the leadership.

We have a stated policy to win the NDP, the rank and file of that party, to a socialist program. This key concept goes out the window with the following quotations from Volume 4 No. 11: "The NDP holds out little prospect of major advance . . . the NDP's betrayal of native peoples' support . . . the whole NDP approach is one of smug self-satisfaction, appealing to the conservative instincts of middle-class Manitobans . . No substantial force within the party is today advancing a socialist alternative . . . the NDP campaign is in no way aimed at increasing popular desire and readiness for change . . . the NDP, posing as moderate administrators of the capitalist system . . ."

The page four headline is "Manitoba NDP blurs class image." The comrades who wrote this article have blurred the most important of distinctions. They have blurred the distinction between the liberal-reformist leadership of the NDP and the party as a whole and thereby dumped our longstanding position of unconditional and critical support.

We must ask the comrades of the editorial board

if they thought that Gandal's document on the NDP (Bulletin #44, April 9/72) which was submitted during the last pre-convention discussion differs in orientation from the coverage of the Manitoba election in these two issues. The 10 conclusions that Gandal and the RCT posed are basically in accord with the treatment of the NDP in this coverage. This is particularly true of conclusion number 7 (page 40): "The election of NDP governments in B.C., Manitoba and Saskatchewan provides excellent opportunities to provide graphic running commentaries of the bankruptcy of social-democratic reformism." And in point number 6 (on page 39), we find: "We demonstrate that we support this party grudgingly, reluctantly, that the emphasis is on 'critical' rather than 'support'."

Although the comrades responsible for Labor Challenge may have reservations about the exact formulations in the RCT document, it is clear that they have much more in common with it than they have with our well-developed and long-held strategic orientation. Marxists understand that you can't really understand a thing until you understand its opposite. The 1970 document is the thing in this case. So far, the Gandal document is the opposite and constitutes the only clear critique that justifies the mistaken line of Labor Challenge.

Finally, in Vol. 4, number 12, on page five, we announced the victory of the Manitoba NDP in Labor Challenge. This was a factual article that showed the very real gains made in the election. In the context of the previous coverage the reader must conclude that Labor Challenge was not intervening to help the NDP but only to make the record for the future when, as Gandal put it, "they will see we are right."

Also, in conformity with one of Gandal's strictures, the article made a "graphic running commentary" on

the inadequacy of the NDP's campaign by stating: "The NDP campaign was built solely around the selling of the premier's personality, presenting Schreyer as a veritable miracle-man. As such it did nothing to build the confidence of the working class base of the NDP in its own power."

Ironically, at the end of the article, LC let Schreyer himself sum up the real issue of the election. LC quoted him, without any comment at all, as saying: "We are taking on those who really control the wealth and the destiny of our nation. But if we are really determined, we can beat money any day of the week." Did this reflect a campaign built solely around "the premier's personality" or one that does "nothing to build the confidence of the working class base"?

THE CASE OF THE RAILWAY STRIKE

In dealing with the Women's Ministry, Labor Challenge's disorientation on our traditional approach to the NDP revealed a general unhinging. Its approach to the NDP so deteriorated that it wound up unable to even deal truthfully with the railway strike.

Labor Challenge's critical rejection of the NDP came to full flower in its coverage of the railway strike. This was certainly one of the most important labor battles of the entire year to which appropriately Labor Challenge allocated considerable space and prominence. The editors' magnification of the bankruptcy of the NDP leadership led Labor Challenge into a unique and devastatingly false position. Assuming that the comrades did their job and read Hansard and the bourgeois press, we can only conclude from this coverage that the editors have become completely blinded by their hatred for the NDP leadership and so contemptuous of illusions about parliament, that they have distorted their reporting to

the point of exposing themselves to a charge of lying.

On page one of Vol. 4, number 15, Labor Challenge claimed: "Lewis and NDP MPs failed to oppose parliamentary strikebreaking . . ." On page two: "Instead of taking a clear, principled stand which could have educated many workers, the NDP joined the haggling over the terms under which the rail workers' strike would be broken . . ." On page three: "the NDP has offered no support to the rail unions . . .its parliamentary representatives have supported the strike-breaking moves of the Liberals." LC went on to say that the NDP "endorsed the imposed wage settlement in the rail strike."

What really happened? The NDP fought against this legislation and for the demands of the rail unions. What everyone, but Labor Challenge, knows was reported everywhere. Even Labor Action,* which thought the NDP opposition "half hearted and timid," reported that "in reversal of the role it played in the last rail strike . . . the NDP opposed the bill sending the railworkers back . . . the mounting attack on the trade union leaderships . . .made it mandatory that the NDP oppose this piece of strikebreaking legislation."

The NDP opposed the bill in principle. They fought against legislative intervention in the strike and voted against it with the support of one Tory MP. After the defeat of this position they put forward a motion to amend the bill which would raise the level of the base wage increase to the last negotiating figure of the union. They lost the vote. They then supported a Conservative Party amendment which was to raise the base wage increase to a point between the union's position and the Liberal government's. This was defeated. They then reaffirmed their principled opposition to the bill and voted against it.

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* publication ot the Canadian Lambertists

What should Labor Challenge have said in the context of our strategic orientation to the NDP? In the past, we would have directed ourselves to the main class question and thus the truth of that debate, instead of searching for some way to attack the NDP leadership at all costs and on all occasions. We would have told the simple truth and brought that to the attention of the working people of Canada. We would have taken advantage of the NDP speeches, some of which were good, to deepen the resistance of the class to compulsory arbitration. We would have demonstrated this debate was further proof of the need for independent labor political action and called on workers to participate in the NDP.

Instead, Labor Challenge stooped to falsify the NDP's position and hid behind the demagogy of Liberal Jean Marchand. This is the same Marchand who is known throughout the left, particularly in Quebec, as a notorious renegade because of his defection from the post of leader of the CNTU to become a Liberal cabinet minister. Labor Challenge went so far as to write that "Transport Minister Jean Marchand scored a telling point against the NDP . . ." In this case, the telling point that we commended Marchand for saying is "If the NDP had really taken a socialist attitude they would have been opposed to any kind of settlement legislated by this House, regardless of public opinion." It is incomprehensible that we would quote, approvingly, a labor renegade to the bourgeoisie against the labor party leadership. It indicates that LC has abandoned the distinction between the two. It also indicates that we are no longer talking to workers who have loyalty to their labor party and who would charge us with the responsibility to expose Marchand for the rat he is.

Marchand used ultra-left demogogy about how real socialists would have proceeded --"regardless of public opinion." What is implicit in this "telling point"?

Should the NDP have boycotted the debate? Should the NDP parliamentarians have abrogated their duty to fight for the highest minimum level as the starting point for the wage negotiations that were going to continue? Do Labor Challenge's editors think that parliament is not an arena for negotiation with the Liberal government, employer of the workers in the nationalized CNR? And let us not forget the NDP opposed the bill in principle as well. How do the editors think the caucus should have proceeded? They don't say. They just let Marchand make the "telling point" that they have not "really taken a socialist attitude. . .", as if anything at all is useful to attack the NDP with.

Our position of unconditional and critical support would have left plenty of room to attack Lewis's speech to the Parliament Hill demonstration. We could have had a very educational article on the need for extra-parliamentary struggle and the brass's uneasiness about it. As a matter of fact, if we had begun by recognizing the basic correctness of the NDP in this debate we could have put forward any valid criticisms. The telling point is that there wasn't enough for Labor Challenge to criticize so it distorted reality, thus making Labor Challenge unique as a left paper because it proceeded from what didn't happen.

In Vol. 4, number 16, there was a curious ambivalence in the article on page 9 of this issue where we discussed the return to work with a union militant. We didn't recommend defiance but, in the lead of the article, we quoted Louis Laberge as saying that, if he were president of the CLC, he would have recommended the workers not to return. "If a law is unjust, I would fight it no matter what the cost."

The fact that we did not comment on Laberge's statement implies that we were supporting defiance. But,

given the heavy penalties for defying the legislation and the conjuncture of the ebbing militancy of the strikers, combined with deterioration of general public support, such a position would have been adventurist.

The interview that followed was with a very class conscious militant who was a member of one of the last locals to go back to work. He pointed out some of the very real gains of the strike in the breakdown of the traditional barriers among the railworkers who are in many separate craft unions, and the growth of consciousness of the necessity for one industrial, perhaps Canadian, union. He indicated that there were now new possibilities to fight the conservative union brass.

He told of one of the meetings in the Vancouver area where strikers passed a resolution calling on the CLC, the BC Federation of Labor, and the Vancouver Labor Council to organize mass rallies in support of their right to strike. He said "we hoped by the resolution to legitamatize the intervention of trade unionists in other parts of the country. But it was never picked up by any significant forces . . .Therefore the only responsible action we could recommend to the members, (and the council did this) was that they return to work."

Do we think Lewis should have acted differently? Should he have publicly split with the trade union leadership and urged railway workers to defy the legislation? What were we recommending? What position did we have, hiding behind the romantic rhetoric of Laberge's statement? Did we think that the class, whom we are supposed to be writing to, was surging to break past the leaders of their movements? If that were so, the leadership's conservatism would be a betrayal. We would have been right to judge their defaults as if they were positive acts. But it was not so.

We should have been writing careful, positive articles about the potentials revealed in these class battles. At this stage of development, it is our support of the class struggles and organizations that is the main bridge to the workers' consciousness -- not the criticisms of their, as yet undiscredited, leadership. This leadership will be discredited by events, not irresponsible attacks. Instead of making the reformist leaders the main target of our attack, we should have struck first and foremost against the bosses and their political stooges!.

THE MACK-ADDISON EXPULSIONS

Another indicator of the change in our orientation to the NDP was LC's treatment of the Mack-Addison expulsions Vol.4, No.16). The first thing we must note is that ,in the framework of "long range fraction work with a no-split perspective," it was either just a foolish act or a provocation to ask the New Democrat to accept an ad from Labor Challenge. The LSA and its press are proscribed in the NDP. We have fought that proscription as supporters and members of the NDP but the reality of the struggle at that time dictated a defensive posture on the part of socialist militants in the labor party. The only justification for such an aggressive request would be that we are attempting to expose the NDP brass as being opposed to having socialists in the party. Of course they are. Didn't they just expel the Waffle? Have they not got a long record of expelling Trotskyists? Was there some viable force within the NDP that we are seeking to rally and educate by having them reject our ad? Did Labor Challenge have a large NDP readership that we hoped would be angered and therefore join with us to increase the circulation of our paper ? Why did we do it?

To find a sensible answer we have to drop our strategic and long range orientation which would make us consider such questions, and turn to the needs we would feel if we had a position of treating the NDP as an opponent political organization which we were forced to expose at every opportunity - even when we had to provoke the opportunity. We would be searching for the chance to do what Gandal and the RCT said in their NDP document. As they see our purpose, it is that "our press and cadre always should emphasize that the NDP exists to repress and betray the class struggle and to rationalize the capitalist system" (emphasis added). "It (the NDP) is just in the way - plain and simple."

Or if not, let's assume that it was all a mistake and the comrades somehow thought that the ad would be accepted. Let's assume that they overlooked the fact that the sample copy they sent to the NDP contained the political resolution with the sharpest formulation of our difference with the program of the party and their leadership.

Imagine our chagrin when we discovered that we had given the NDP brass a fortuitous opportunity to expel more comrades and deepen the prejudice that exists against us in the party. But it won't work much further. The way Labor Challenge replied to Vichert* was in the framework of deepening our differentiation from the NDP.

We do have a tradition of how we defend our right to be in the NDP. We have always fought on the grounds that emphasize what we as socialists have in common with the NDP as a labor party. We have always pointed out how we are the best defenders and builders of the labor party. We have always refused to let the leadership sidetrack the argument into the question of incompatible ideologies. Recognizing the level of development of the consciousness of the working class at this time, and the brass's very real mandate to lead the party, we have always argued for our right to be in the party on the basis of our work and the concrete

*Gordon Vichert, then NDP Provincial Secretary.

necessity for the NDP to follow socialist policies. When they have tried to make it a discussion of reform versus revolution, we have countered with our defensive demands that they implement the socialist positions adopted at conventions. In this way we aimed to mobilize the democratic sentiments of the rank and file behind us.

We have always taken special care to circumvent the prejudice in the ranks of the NDP against dual party structures. During the formation of the NDP we posed the concept of a federated structure, with ourselves as a legitimate part of the NDP. We have always defended ourselves as a legitimate socialist wing in and of the NDP - never as a counter-party within the party, with a tactical adaptation to that party.

So it is difficult to even imagine our line in Labor Challenge (volume 4, number 16). But there it is. They proudly published the whole of Vichert's letter that substantiates that ours is only a tactical adaptation and we are thus not truly supporters of the NDP.

But that is small potatoes in relation to the convention resolution Labor Challenge handed Vichert to use against us. And Labor Challenge welcomed the argument on his grounds. It used this expulsion as a chance to do propaganda for the Leninist party and the revolutionary road to socialism. As Vichert said in his letter, "I would be grateful if you would give this letter as much publicity as you can." Well, we sure are obliging, and he must have been doubly grateful that we hastened to validate his contention that we have a "point of view which is in fundamental opposition to the democratic socialism of the NDP."

That our strategic orientation had been abandoned for a tactic of fundamental criticism, sugar-coated with abstract support is underscored by the fact that the LSA made no appeal against these expulsions to the ranks of the party - in astonishing contrast to all our previous responses.

Ironically, the only place in which an appeal was made was in the November '73 issue of Liberation* which is circulated primarily in Quebec where the NDP has almost no base.

Labor Challenge ended its article with the concept that we intended to fight on (illegally? subversively?) because, despite its program, its leadership and its structure, "to the degree that the NDP is rooted in the class struggle, rank and file militant currents will inevitably emerge to contest the class collaborationist course of the leadership." This prose conforms all too well to the Gandal-RCT line on the "revolutionary" approach to expulsions. We will have to forgive any present militants who might conclude that they would have to know how to do a better job than we.' But it is probably better they consider us inept than sectarian. Truly a Hobson's choice, and inexcusable given our understanding of the problem and our wealth of experience in dealing with it.

YOUNG/RIDDELL REPLY ON LSA/LSO RECORD

On the very eve of our convention the IEC Majority Tendency thrust into the international discussion a document that assailed the LSA/LSO on a whole series of fronts of its work. This document, authored by Germain and titled In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International, focussed first and foremost on our position on the NDP. The IEC Majority Tendency charged that "the position which the LSA/LSO leadership has adopted towards the reformist social-democratic party, the NDP... expresses a clear tailist deviation from Leninism."

Germain has been familiar with the work of the Canadian section for a long time. Now, for the first time, he charges the Canadian section with deviationism. According to Germain, the position that the Labor Party Tendency is challenging the central office leadership with abandoning has all along been a "tailist deviation from Leninism." "Tailism" was the word that the RCT pinned on the orientation that was outlined in the 1970 document,

*Liberation, the paper of the Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere, Quebec homologue of the LSA.

Our Orientation to the NDP; the Strategy and its Tactical Application, over a year ago.

While the Political Committee Majority did not defend the LSA/LSO from this charge in the pre-convention and convention discussion, and certainly did not do so with the generaltities of the Political Resolution, Comrades Young and Riddell have now attempted such a defence in their reply to Germain titled The Real Record of the Canadian Section; in reply to Comrade Germain.

Thus we have two important pieces of documented evidence to examine: (1) our press, and whether a series of articles in their totality constitute an abandonment of our longstanding orientation, and (2) the Young/Riddell contribution and whether it actually is a defence of our longstanding orientation.

We have not dealt with the work of the movement, largely for two reasons;(1) with the defection of the Waffle, our work in the NDP has suffered a tremendous setback; and (2) such an analysis would rest to a considerable degree on an interpretation of events about which there is little documentary evidence. We do not, for instance, evaluate the dispute over our experience with the Red Circle in the Ontario NDP. Nor do we deal with the controversies over our line at the BC federal convention. To do so, we would have to resort to interpreting impressions and recollections that this or that comrade has of those interesting and highly relevant experiences. We are passing them by in favor of documented evidence, more or less available to everyone, showing the abandonment of our line and practice.

Germain's document In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International is one of the most important documents in the discussion taking place throughout the world-wide Trotskyist movement. It is of particular importance to Canadian Trotskyists, not only because it singles out their organization and its central orientation for attack, but because it inevitably casts a pall over and discredits a most significant contribution that the LSA/

LSO has made to the international discussion on party building -- particularly in those countries where our sections are small and relatively isolated while confronted with the challenge of a mass labor party formation. We are referring to the contribution that we submitted to this international discussion over two years ago, the documented Our Orientation to the NDP; the Strategy and its Tactical Application. This was the sole Canadian contribution to the international discussion until the recent Young/Riddell contribution and appeared in International Information Bulletin No. 6 in 1971 (November 1971).

If today, with their continental guerrilla warfare strategy, leading elements in the IEC Majority Tendency can be said to be adapting to ultra-leftist pressures in the new radicalization, this cannot be said to have always been their tendency. For many years they were practitioners of "entry sui generis" which led in many countries, particularly in Belgium where Germain played the leading role, to adaptationism, even liquidationism, into social-democratic formations of the most classic type. This policy was terminated only by earth-shaking events -- the rise of the new youth radicalisation, its explosion in the French struggles of May-June 1968, and the flood of new and militant forces into our debilitated ranks.

TWO AIMS TO GERMAIN'S ATTACK

Thus the Germain document serves two key purposes. First, it diverts the attention of the world movement from the IEC Majority Tendency's adaptationism to ultra-leftist pressures in the new radicalisation. It distracts the world movement from the IEC Majority's failure to make a serious evaluation and allow the world movement to assimilate the lessons of the disasters that their adaptationism has brought us, particularly in Bolivia and Argentina. The Germain document does this by raising the bogey of adaptationism to reformist social democracy, of tailist deviationism from Leninism by at least two Trotskyist formations supporting the Lenin-Trotsky Faction.

Secondly, the Germain document attempts to dismiss any serious evaluation by the world movement of the significant

contribution of Canadian Trotskyism on how to cope with a mass labor party formation and win revolutionary cadres on a principled basis to Trotskyism and the Fourth International. It tries to bury the principled experience of the Canadian Trotskyist movement which stands in such direct counterposition to the liquidationist experiences of important parts of the European cadre extending over the 1950's and into the 1960's. It attempts to do so by smearing the Canadian Trotskyist experience as being in effect a violation of Leninist-Trotskyist principles.

Comrade Germain is a longstanding leader of the world movement with years of detailed and first-hand experience with the Canadian section and its leadership. He is well acquainted with the orientation of the Canadian movement to the NDP labor party formation and its experiences in carrying out that orientation. Up until this damning and sweeping attack on our orientation to the NDP, Germain and his co-thinkers have not so much as uttered a word of criticism of this central aspect of the Canadian section's work. With this contribution however, Germain frontally attacks that orientation now in operation since the formation of the NDP in 1961, and almost a decade before that with its predecessor, the CCF.

There can be no misunderstanding. Germain's attack is not on this or that incident or possible misapplication of our orientation on certain occasions. It is an attack from the point of view of principle, on the orientation itself. This is of course quite understandable in the light of the IEC Majority's support of the RCT right up until it split from the Canadian section and aligned with the Revolutionary Marxist Group.

According to Germain, "the position that the LSA/LSO (Canadian section) leadership -- staunch supporter of the minority position on Latin America -- has adopted towards the reformist social-democratic party, the NDP, in its country, and its position on the October 30, 1972 general elections in Canada in particular, expresses a clear tailist deviation from Leninism." The paragraphs

following this statement outline the particular evidence -- extensive quotes from a leaflet published by the YS/LJS, and an editorial from Labor Challenge. They are offered as proof of the general charge that our position on the NDP is tailist.

To make it crystal clear that he is not merely attacking inadequacies in a couple of the many articles that appear in the Canadian Trotskyist press on the NDP, Germain quickly moves off these extensive quotes, as if what he says about them is self-evident. For our part, we would note in passing that one of the pieces of evidence, the YS/LJS leaflet, is a competent presentation of our orientation and the other, the LC editorial is a violation of it.

Germain continues for several paragraphs to give his view of the character of the NDP, its leadership and its role in the class struggle, and contrasts several sentences and phrases from the quoted articles with what he considers to be Leninist concepts. He continues with several quotations from Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder, which he counterposes to the position of the Canadian Trotskyist movement.

The Young/Riddell reply, appearing in Volume X No. 16 of the International Internal Bulletin, attempts to come to grips with Germain's scatter-gun blast at a whole number of positions of the Canadian Trotskyists. Our comments in this contribution will be limited to Germain's attack on our orientation to the NDP and Young and Riddell's comments on that position.

How do Comrades Young and Riddell defend the Canadian Trotskyist movement from the attack launched by Germain against the position it "has adopted towards the reformist social democratic party, the NDP" which he charges "expresses a clear tailist deviation from Leninism"?

After noting that Germain makes a long series of criticisms of the two items he quotes, they separate two central points. The two central points that they filter out of Germain's criticisms are: first, that the passages he refers to that argue support of the NDP in elections do not advance a revolutionary critique of the social-democratic leadership of the NDP, and second, that the passages argue that an NDP victory would propel the class struggle forward. This latter projection Young/Riddell add "is by no means guaranteed in advance."

YOUNG/RIDDELL TAKE EVASIVE ACTION

"There is no question that these criticisms are absolutely correct. A number of forumulations in the passages are erroneous," concede Young and Riddell. After making such an admission they challenge Germain with the responsibility of having "to round out his criticisms of these two passages by noting that such erroneous formulations contrast with the correct line carried by the LSA/LSO in its convention resolutions and its publications as a whole, before he leaped to a sweeping conclusion."

What has Germain failed to note? In particular they bring to his attention a peculiar incident covered in Labor Challenge which we commented on earlier in this document as an example of how our line has changed -- the Mack/Addison expulsions. A more suspicious mind than our own, seeing how extremely fortuitous this incident proves to be for the Young/Riddell line of argument, might suspect that it was actually set up to order.

Young/Riddell triumphantly point to this attack on our movement by the provincial secretary of the Ontario NDP -- "one of the leaders whom the LSA/LSO is accused (by Germain) of supporting uncritically."

The reader will recall that the editor of our press,

proscribed by the Ontario NDP leadership some years back, sent what Young/Riddell describe as a "routine request for advertising space in the NDP newspaper." The NDP provincial secretary noted in his reply, which for some reason we published in toto in Labor Challenge, that he was not, as to be expected, accepting "any advertising for the New Democrat which is contrary to the policies and traditions of the party". This portion of the letter is left out of the version appearing in the international bulletin, although there would appear to be no space problem.

For some unexplained reason, along with the letter requesting advertising space for our proscribed paper, which is quite well known to the NDP leadership, we enclosed a copy. It just happened to be the issue which reproduced that portion of our political resolution which detailed, as Marxist-Leninists, our fundamental and principled opposition to the NDP as a "social democratic labor party".

This -- what Young/Riddell describe as a "routine request for advertising space in the NDP newspaper" -- was not sent in the name of our paper's business manager but for some reason by our new editor who is well known to the NDP provincial secretary as a leading public figure in the anti-war movement and a member of the NDP. The result of this "routine request" handled in such a "routine" way was the expulsion of our new editor.

How could Germain "miss the clear line of revolutionary criticism of the NDP in Labor Challenge which so annoyed" the Ontario NDP provincial secretary, Young/Riddell ask? "Is it because the paragraph in Labor Challenge quoted by Vichert," from the political resolution, they ask, "reflects some change in line by the LSA/LSO?" The Poli-

tical Resolution, presented in a routine way to the LSA convention is given special weight in the Young/Riddell argument. A little further down, they refer to the political resolution as "an up-to-date and authoritative statement of the LSA/LSO leadership's policy." Having conceded the correctness of the criticisms Germain made of two items, they present other items which they say carry the correct line, preceding this evidence with the statement: "Nor did the Political Resolution add anything new to the public positions of Canadian Trotskyism in this respect..."

But before proceeding along this line, perhaps we should examine more closely the actual evidence presented by Germain which he alleges proves our movement has a position on the NDP which is "a clear tailist deviation from Leninism." The simple fact that Young and Riddell plead guilty on our behalf should not cause us to automatically accept that plea. Neither of the offending items, the YS leaflet nor the Labor Challenge article was written by them. We are all familiar with capitalist institutions that plead guilty to minor infractions in order to get off, to cover up major crimes. Does this hasty plea have bigger implications than would first meet the eye?

According to Young/Riddell "there is no question that these criticisms are absolutely correct..." that the passages Germain refers to in the YS leaflet and the Labor Challenge article, "do not advance a revolutionary critique of the social democratic leadership of the NDP..."

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST'S LEAFLET

The first matter we will examine is the leaflet which our youth comrades carried into the

most dynamic, although the most politically inexperienced sector of the radicalisation. It is addressed in particular to the 2.8 million youth who had the vote for the first time in that election.

Is the YS leaflet an obvious aberration of our line? Does it contain a number of erroneous formulations which could be said to add up to a violation of our longstanding orientation to the NDP? In the case of the Labor Challenge article, Young and Riddell take pains to say that the editorial board recognized it as faulty and corrected it in the next issue. But in the case of the YS leaflet we are not given even the slightest suggestion as to what is wrong with it.

Young and Riddell plead guilty on behalf of the LSA -- in this case on behalf of the Young Socialists. Thus we are all to conclude that the YS leaflet is a violation of our NDP orientation, or at the very least (not explained to us) that it is not a worthy example of the implementation of our orientation.

Is there any truth at all in Germain's charge that the YS leaflet abstains from revolutionary propaganda against the NDP leadership? Does it present a line that even imolies that a fundamental change, that a break from capitalism as a system can be realized by the masses through an electoral victory of the NDP? We of the LPT -- Labor Party Tendency -- completely deny thus. We think that it is a good, competent and generally correct implementation of our orientation. And on behalf of the YS and the Canadian Trotskyist movement, we reverse the Young/Riddell plea to Germain's charge, to not guilty.

That is not to say that there are no errors in it, or that it could not be improved. For instance we would have asked the YS to consider editing out the word "our" party in reference to the NDP in the sixth paragraph quoted by Germain. But even there a good defence could be marshalled for its retention. For as the leaflet points out, the Young Socialists "are the only active youth movement that supports the NDP." And as the Political Resolution states, "the NDP is the political expression of the political consciousness of the working class...and... poses to the class the need of replacing the government of the capitalists with a workers' government." There is even some tactical advantage for the independent YS, in the absence of an official NDP youth movement, to talk of the NDP as "our party". All the more is this so, we might add, when the tiny Canadian Trotskyist movement, confronted with the massive New Democratic Party, quite correctly calls its organization a league, and not a party.

GERMAIN'S SLIGHT OMISSION

In the quite normal desire to defend our movement and our orientation to the NDP from Germain's assault, we took the trouble to look up the YS leaflet. Germain's quotation from the leaflet includes a section that reads: "the NDP has limitations. Its conservative leadership wants to reform this profit system, not end it. The leadership also sees the parliamentary road as the only road for change, and they sometimes even oppose demonstrations, mass meetings and strikes, etc..." It was this, along with other sections of the leaflet that caused Germain to say that the Labor Challenge article is even more guilty of his charge than the YS

leaflet. But Germain suddenly ends his quotation from the leaflet before the following:

"That's what the Young Socialists is all about. We are the only active youth movement that supports the NDP. And we're out to organize a movement of thousands of youth who are fighting for a better world 365 days of a year, inside and outside the NDP, and determined to use any means necessary, not just elections... We're serious about changing the world. And we know that it will take nothing short of a socialist revolution -- a complete restructuring of society -- to end the injustice, irrationality and brutality of this system. Because it is building the independent power of the oppressed, the campaign to elect the NDP is part of that process. The struggle for change takes a lot of effort and a lot of people. But the future of all of us rests upon it. We need your help. If you think we are right in what we're doing, you should join us. Join us in campaigning for an NDP government. Join us in fighting for a socialist world."

The constant repetition of "us" refers of course, not to the NDP, but to the Canadian Trotskyist youth organization, the Young Socialists. The back page of the leaflet contains a YS membership application form, a list of all the addresses of YS locals and an advertisement and subscription form for the Young Socialist and Labor Challenge.

In our opinion this leaflet, directed to the youth of Canada, particularly to the 2.8 million who for the first time had the vote, and not solely to the vanguard and what it considers to be its particular concerns apart from the problem of mobilizing the class, is a competent one. Within the space available, it is

quite clear on the crisis of leadership, on parliamentarism, and electoralism, and projects our orientation to the NDP with considerable skill.

Since an examination of the leaflet, even without the part that Germain unfortunately omitted, proves the utter falseness of his charge, we must turn to Young and Riddell and ask them, why they pleaded guilty on our behalf. They must tell us what is wrong with this leaflet, not with just a word here or there - but what is wrong with it in substance. What criticisms made by Germain "are absolutely correct"! What formulations, in the passages, even those quoted by Germain, are erroneous?

Germain characterizes the portion of the YS leaflet he quotes as "astonishing prose" before he proceeds to deal with his quotation from Labor Challenge. He does not elucidate what he means by the word "astonishing", as if it is obvious. But he does go to the trouble of italicizing three sentences to bring them to our attention.

The paragraph preceeding the start of his quote had a subhead "Who Will Rule Canada." The paragraph within the quote, prior to the italicized section had a subhead "The Corporations..." And the italicized section had a subhead "...or us!." Thus the leaflet attempts to pose the class question, the various struggles of the working class and the role the various parties play in these struggles.

The three sentences that Germain calls to our special attention read:

"The NDP can propel them forward. An NDP victory would inspire and intensify the different movements of the oppressed. A Labor government could win concrete gains for the working people and open

the way for fundamental social change."

To Germain's charge and to Young and Riddell's plea of guilty, we must reply, that not only the rest of the YS leaflet but these three sentences too, are by no means an aberration in the application by the YS or the LSA of our longstanding orientation to the NDP. Quite the contrary. The leaflet is a competent application of our basic orientation to the NDP. In his selection of this particular YS leaflet Germain has by no means taken unfair advantage. He has not, by chance, hit us at some weak spot. Quite the contrary. He has hit at our orientation --squarely!.

BEHIND THE DISAVOWAL OF THE YS LEAFLET

If, as we claim, the YS leaflet does generally correctly articulate our orientation, Young and Riddell as spokesmen of the LSA are required to defend it. If it does not, they are required to explain how it does not articulate our line, and perhaps even more important, why this could happen. Of course, there is another possible explanation that lurks behind an acceptance of Germain's criticism. That is, that in the intervening time Young and Riddell have come to agree that there is some basic weakness in our orientation, which has certainly been under an unprecedented attack on all fronts. But of course, if that were so they should say so openly, not indulge in self-criticism, but to help the movement correct or even change its orientation.

As for Germain's criticism of the Labor Challenge article of September 27, 1972, we concur with one aspect of his criticism -- that this article "doesn't contain a single word of criticism of reformism and electoralism, not a single word of differentiation from social democracy." This is so much the worse, as some comrades now in the Labor Party Tendency pointed out

at the time, when you know that the NDP brass had just driven the left wing Waffle out of the ranks of the party.

Young and Riddell immediately accept this criticism and rapidly move off this article to point to other articles -- two in the August 21st issue, another in the September 25th issue and another in an October issue, to demonstrate that the September 27 article was just an inexplicable error.

Germain recognizes that the error is such an obvious one that it must be "A.B.C. for the leadership of the LSA as well." "Why then," he continues, "do they write the exact opposite to what they believe on these questions?" Young and Riddell do not answer this question. They plead guilty to his charge, and so they too pass off the error as an inexplicable one.

However that error, and a series of the same kind of errors were committed in the period when the Waffle left wing was headed out of the NDP and we were under increasing ultra-left pressure from the Red Circle and the RCT. As we noted previously, Harry Knight in Bulletin 54 outlined the PC majority's record of zigzags and adaptations "both to the left and the right". This "zig" that Germain picked up in order to attack our orientation, as Knight pointed out, was a "by-product of the PC majority's mission against the Waffle's supposed cop-out on socialism..." As Knight points out "the euphoric lapses in our press, the muting of our criticism of the NDP leadership...cannot be explained in any other context."

This question disappears under the rug and Young and Riddell sweep on, ignoring the emphasis that Germain makes of certain sentences in the Labor Challenge editorial. Germain singles out these sentences as additional proof that the LSA/LSO's position is a

"clear tailist deviation from Leninism."

One sentence reads: "but the election of NDP governments to power constitutes big strides in the path that the working class of this country are going to take towards breaking not only from capitalist electoral politics but from capitalism as a system." (Germain's emphasis.)

The other sentence that Germain brings to our attention reads: "Through the NDP the lessons of the radicalization amongst the youth, in the women's liberation movement, the lessons of the Quebec and Native liberation struggles, are being transmitted to, discussed and debated among the advanced workers of the country. It is through the NDP that the political consciousness of the working class in Canada is being forged and shaped."

YOUNG/RIDDELL REPUDIATE OUR ORIENTATION

Young and Riddell concede that certain of Germain's criticisms are "absolutely correct". Do they include the criticisms of the italicized portions within this category of "absolutely correct"? And when Young and Riddell say that "the passages argue that an NDP victory would propel the class struggle forward which is by no means guaranteed in advance," are they referring to the italicized sections as well?

Germain's implied criticisms through the italicization of these sentences cannot be sloughed aside so lightly. These passages have nothing at all to do with guarantees in advance. They express how we see the class struggle and through what forms we see it advancing over the next period in this country. They are a projection of an orientation. Furthermore, that is exactly how Germain takes them on, in his later comments. Where precisely, we must ask, do Young and Riddell stand on these italicized sections that Germain attacks? The LPT stands by them!

There is neither time nor space at this time to comment on the other aspects of Germain's attack on our orientation that immediately follows. We think, from the above comments, that it is quite clear that Young and Riddell have not defended our orientation as it has been established over the years. Quite the contrary. Their failure to do so, their headlong retreat before Germain's attack which is substantially the same as the attack by the RCT which they failed to answer, leads us to conclude that on the terms that we have always understood it, they think our NDP orientation is indefensible. One is led to conclude that they themselves have come to question that orientation and are now in the process of revising it to such an extent, as recent coverage in our press shows, that they have actually abandoned our orientation to the mass labor party.

We will now move on to that part of the Young/Riddell reply to Germain that is titled "II. Towards Discussing the Real Issues. Subsection I. Some starting Points for an NDP Debate". But first let us pause to get some perspective.

The previous sections of this document were developed within the framework of the common experience, understanding and implementation of our orientation to the CCF/NDP. This orientation commenced to find concrete expression over 20 years ago when the Trotskyist movement concluded that the CCF was a labor party formation (1948) and it moved towards making an entry into it (1952). This whole experience was tersely summed up in the document Our Orientation to the NDP: The Strategy and its tactical application, (1970) now referred to by Young and Riddell for some unexplained reason as simply "Our Orientation to the NDP".

Our movement, like all other Canadian political bodies, has an orientation, and has positioned itself

in relation to the CCF/NDP. Since 1952, Canadian Trotskyism has had what it has called a strategic orientation to the Canadian labor party formation, both during its CCF and its NDP phases. We have not conceived of it as a tactic, and the CCF/NDP just another work area, even if perhaps a more important one. This strategic or long range orientation has been the framework within which we have employed several widely differing tactics. These have included an entry, in the process of which we gave up our entire public face, including our press. These tactics, which have at one time seen us direct all the energies of our open organization and press to the CCF/NDP, and under different circumstances, saw us direct almost our entire energies outside of and independently of the CCF/NDP, were all worked out in the light of the varied concrete situations that confronted us and were all designed to build the Trotskyist movement.

We have made this longstanding strategic orientation of our movement the framework of our argument in this document, not because of any maudlin or sentimental attachment to our past but because it expresses the hard fought lessons of the past and is the promise of future gains. Of course it might be that recent developments have already proven the inadequacy of our previous concepts or are posing problems that some comrades may think are proving such an inadequacy. For instance the NDP is not only in office in the Prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan but also in BC, and it is quite possible we will have a labor government in Ontario within the next three or four years. Although we should note that if this poses problems, they are not exactly new ones for us since the CCF was elected to office in Saskatchewan back in 1944. But perhaps we have been hewing to a strategy of some 20 years duration that is based on a false methodology that only now for some reason is becoming clear.

If, for whatever reason, Trotskyists come to think that previous longstanding central concepts of their movement are proving to be inadequate and need to be developed, given new emphasis; or if they think they are proving to be wrong in life, they commence in a responsible way (above all to preserve what is useful from the past) to make whatever adjustments or changes may be necessary. They make this process an experience of the movement as a whole. They don't do it behind the backs of the movement, but openly and above board. If differences commence over the use of terminology or formulations, they attempt to take it off this plane and to get to the very essence of the problem. They present an accurate picture of what our position has been, outline the error, and if it involves something substantial, for instance an error in theory, they attempt to trace it to its origin and draw it to its full conclusions. To do otherwise is to risk setting off a tremendous process of miseducation among the cadre.

In the summer and fall of 1972 some comrades, then in the United Tendency, noted what they considered to be zig zags and "adaptation both to the left and to the right", on the part of the Central Office leadership with regards to the NDP. Even more alarming, all during the pre-convention period in the face of the all-out assault on our NDP orientation, first by the Unified Minority Tendency and then by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, the leadership remained silent. Following the convention some comrades began to develop an uneasy feeling that some articles on the NDP appearing in our press were not expressing our orientation. Shortly, in their opinion, these articles began to reveal a distinct trend, constituting in their totality an abandonment of our orientation.

After protesting about some of the articles, Comrade R.Dowson asked the leadership to present a document to

the movement developing their views on our NDP orientation. The Lambertists were openly stating in their press, Labor Action, that the LSA had changed its line on the NDP. And ex-RCTers, now RMGers, were wryly commenting that the RCT line document on the NDP that had been rejected by the LSA/LSO convention was now the line being carried by Labor Challenge.

Some LSA/LSO Central Office leaders began to suggest that the 1970 document has some significant shortcomings, that there are terminological problems, and conceded that there were errors in this or that Labor Challenge article. But they denied that there was any pattern, and vigorously denied that they were changing our line on the NDP or were even intending to do so. They asked Dowson to present a written detailed critique of the various contentious articles.

Dowson demurred. He said that he did not consider it his responsibility to ferret out and record a process that he considered to be transparently clear. He suggested that this would not be the proper way to prpceed, particularly as it would put him, former Executive Secretary, against the leadership, in the eyes of the movement. He proposed that the CO leadership, whatever the reason for not having done so before, should at long last present the now obviously needed document on the NDP. No moves were made to do so. The process continued in the pages of Labor Challenge, and a group of comrades decided to form the Labor Party Tendency.

Do we merely have a series of errors appearing in Labor Challenge, which show no pattern or direction, that should be brought to the attention of the editorial board for rectification? And do we merely have the dropping of a number of words and phrases that have nothing to do with the essence of our orientation,

and should be cleaned up? Quite the contrary! We think it obvious from the limited amount of material that we have noted and commented upon here in this document that Labor Challenge articles show a clear trend towards a sectarian revision of our longstanding strategic orientation and in their totality constitute an abandonment of our orientation to the mass labor party. The elimination of a whole series of words, phrases, formulations that we have heretofore used to describe and define our orientation, particularly in the 1970 document, reflect and express a change in the content, the essence of our longstanding orientation to the NDP.

The above material could be said to fall in the category of circumstantial evidence of a change in line. Aside from the Political Resolution which we have shown to be largely irrelevant in this respect, there has been no documentary expression of the recent thinking of the CO leadership. But now we have before us a document authored by Comrades Young and Riddell, The Real Record of the Canadian Section - In reply to Comrade Germain, and in particular that section of the document titled Some Starting Points for an NDP Debate.

At first glance the title Some Starting Points for an NDP Debate is puzzling. One would anticipate that our reply would be a clear and precise outline and defence of our longstanding position on the CCF/NDP which Germain claims expresses a tailist deviation from Leninism, that it would develop our view of our orientation as expounded in the 1970 convention document Our Orientation to the NDP; the strategy and its Tactical Application. After all, it is that document that the RCT specifically assailed and which is of particular concern to Germain and the International since it is our contribution to the international discussion on entry sui generis. Why don't we start from there?

One would expect a title more along the line of Tailism or Revolutionary Intervention -- more on Canadian Trotskyist practice. But it turns out upon examination that the Young/Riddell contribution is more or less correctly titled. It is certainly not an explaination and defence of the LSA/LSO's orientation to the NDP.

This section of the document is truly and quite uniquely a contribution of Comrades Young and Riddell for it addresses itself to our orientation in such a way as has never, up until October 1973 (its date of publication) been discussed on any official level of the Canadian movement with the possible exception of the Political Bureau. At long last we have some configurations, some sketchy outlines of the thinking of some leading comrades - the Executive Secretary and the Organizational Secretary of the LSA/LSO. They appear for the first time, not in a bulletin of the LSA/LSO, not in a discussion on any level of the Canadian movement, but in the final days of a hectic discussion preparatory to the world congress in an international discussion bulletin, and thus with a highly official status as the Canadian movement's views.

This section of the Young/Riddell contribution starts off from certain basic fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism as to the essential nature of social democracy and reformism. It touches on the treacherous role of social democracy as an ideological force -- as a transmission belt for bourgeois ideology. As an organisational force it puts social democracy in historic terms, as "a detour for the English Canadian working class", not an unuseful metaphor since all contemporary history proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that a revolutionary vanguard party is a life and death matter and must be built as best possible now!

It is often good to go back to basic principles, to be constantly alerted to the danger of adaptationism and tailism that confronts Trotskyists, particularly where there is a labor party formation which because of its centrality in the radicalization, figures large in their work to build the revolutionary vanguard party.

However, it is not clear as to their relevancy in what Young and Riddell call "an NDP debate" that they initiate with this section. As such, it is certainly not involved in the debate that we have had with the Revolutionary Communist Tendency and its line document authored by Gandal, except in the most indirect way The RCT was particularly strong in emphasizing these basic fundamentals. In fact they accused the LSA/LSO, in the process of what they alleged to be a liquidationist approach to the NDP, of being led to some serious theoretical revisions of these very first principles. However, in our opinion the problem was the other way around - not at all unexpected when revolutionary socialists are generally isolated from the class and under heavy ultra-left pressure. With the RCT these first principles, these formulations, tended to substitute for a real, a specific appraisal of the NDP as an expression of social democracy. Failing that, they proved unable to arrive at a correct orientation to it.

In fact we can say that ignorance of these basic Marxist-Leninist concepts is not the problem with our opponents on the left. The problem with the Maoists, the CP, and now even with some important forces in the Waffle, is not their unfamiliarity with, or ignorance of the historic role of reformism and social democracy. Instead of demonstrating to the workers who are under the influence of the social democratic mis-leaders how (what we revolutionists know to be) first principles are being proven in life itself, instead of patiently proving in life itself the correctness of the theory, they have turned it into a dogma. It is this elevation of these concepts to the

ethereal realm of dogma which has made it impossible for our opponents on the left to take a correct position on the concrete expression of reformism-social democracy in Canada.

Nor does this approach appear, certainly at this time, to be very relevant in a debate with Germain. While it is sometimes a good tactic to draw out differences and to thereby warn of their inner logic, it also has the grave danger of covering over or confusing the real differences. It is hard to believe, certainly at this time, that Young and Riddell are serious when they question; " Comrade Germain expresses no opinion on whether the LSA/LSO is correct to utilize the tactic of critical support to the NDP."

The problem for the LSA/LSO, under the pressure of our opponents on the left, is to retain our dialectical definition of the NDP, our concrete appraisal of its internal dynamics and its role in the radicalization, to retain our active and not waiting policy, in a word our orientation to the NDP. What is at stake is not first principles but our orientation.

In the belief that it flows inevitably and logically from these first principles, the RCT took us into what is a counter-productive debate - and others have followed them into it - as to whether we Trotskyists of the independently structured LSA/LSO are opposed to the NDP or whether we support the NDP. Some comrades state that as a political organization we are opposed to the NDP we are opposed, period, and no "ifs, "ands" or "buts".

This is a rather difficult concept to grasp since leading LSA activists favor and fight in union locals for affiliation to the NDP and from time to time LSA representatives call for the NDP's election to office, even egging it on to contest municipal office. It is all the more difficult to grasp in the light of our policy that

all comrades who are able, hold membership in the NDP and, when it seems favorable, actively participate in it, even assuming posts in its provincial executive bodies.

Obviously such formulations are not adequate to present our stance to the NDP, and on closer examination that also holds for the concept that the NDP is a detour even historically. A detour eventually gets you to the same destination as the main road, in this case, we assume, the socialist revolution. But we know that the road of the revolutionary vanguard, the road of class struggle, is the only road, and that social democracy (class collaboration) is not just a slower, round-about or circuitous route. If the NDP is only a detour, perhaps for some reason we might actually consider taking it. The problem is - it never arrives at the socialist revolution.

The first striking feature of the Young/Riddell document is that it is not placed within the framework of our orientation as it has heretofore been generally understood by our cadre. The concepts of our movement that present us as supporting the NDP as a political party, which has heretofore been the main emphasis of our orientation, are missing. All the words, the phrases and concepts that we have up until now employed to express our orientation are gone. The main slant of the Young/Riddell document is that the NDP is an obstacle and that the LSA/LSO opposes the NDP as a political party. Our concept of its role - we don't want to haggle over words but - as we expressed it in the 1970 document as being both "in the way and on the way" to the Canadian socialist revolution, is notably missing. Not only are the words gone but so is the concept.

From reading the Young/Riddell document one could not even say that the LSA/LSO has an orientation to the NDP in any meaning of the word, let alone what we

have heretofore called a strategic or long range orientation to the NDP which expresses the organic nature of the ties between our tasks and the main political vehicle of rising class consciousness in Canada. They present our position as being merely one of a tactical attitude to the NDP.

Here is how they sum it up :"the present orientation of the LSA/LSO consists of critical support to the NDP as the mass political party of the English Canadian labor movement. It is not an entry into the NDP. It entails the work of a portion of LSA members (fraction work) inside the NDP, and an orientation of intervening in the politics of the NDP and the labor movement through independent activity outside the NDP: independent propaganda, independent mass campaigns on particular issues, and all the public activity of the LSA. Thus we intervene in the politics of the NDP both within the NDP, within the unions and from the outside. The balance of the different sides of this work depends on the political conjuncture. Its aim is not to build a centrist or left centrist current in the NDP. Its aim is to increase the working class influence and build the cadres of the Canadian Trotskyist movement."

The presentation of our orientation by Riddell and Young while in some points more or less formally correct is reallya caricature of our orientation in such gross outlines as to be scarcely attributable to the real thing.

Is it possible to describe our past and present relation to the NDP, since there has been no documentation to project a new relationship, unless we actually say we do have a new one, as being one of critical support? The position of critical support is the position of all currents of the left, with the possible exception of the Communist Party of Canada, (Marxist-Leninist). Our position has been one of a much more

profound relation, one might even say identification with the NDP in every sense, in all our tactics.

Only three years ago, the 1970 document expressed it as "one of unconditional support and intensive fraction work with a non-split perspective." Our line has been not to run against the NDP in elections. Of course there have been exceptions, the last in Quebec where the NDP is no significant factor, but these exceptions only serve to prove the rule. When the NDP does not contest an election and we do, we generally identify our campaign with the need for independent labor political action, and so direct our campaign as to identify it in the public mind with the NDP.

If there is one aspect of Canadian Trotskyism that stands out in the minds of the forces of the left and differentiates us from our organized opponents on the left, it is our support of the NDP. So much is this a part of our movement that some comrades of the Labor Party Tendency thought that the LSA leadership, including Young and Riddell, went so far on a crucial occasion as to make a "fetish"of the NDP. At the time that the Waffle under the assault of the Lewis leadership was clearly moving outside of the ranks of the NDP in the direction of building an independent party,we drew a line of blood between ourselves and them around the demand "Stay In and Fight".

We do not want to haggle over words but in our opinion our 1970 document did not err in stating that our orientation was one of unconditional support of the NDP, and of course critical. It could not be understood to be anything else than critical, since we sustain an independent organization and press which carries the full program of the proletarian revolution and identifies itself with the Fourth International. Alas, some comrades have found a dictionary that defines the word unconditional as "absolute". And of

course, as Marxists, rejecting all absolutes, they now call this word into question. But there is no question at all about the main thrust of our orientation to the NDP. It has not been critical so much as it has laid down no conditions before the NDP that qualify our support of it as a political party for some 12 years now since it was founded.

It is true that our position vis-a-vis the NDP is not that of entry at this time, although we should keep it in mind that we may well enter the NDP in the future. But is it possible with any kind of exactitude to say as do Young and Riddell that our orientation "entails the work of a portion of the LSA (fraction work) inside the NDP." The fact is that all members of the LSA, except those who we know in advance would automatically be barred, are expected to automatically take out a membership in the NDP.

One could say with some justification that NDP membership is a condition of membership in the LSA and the YS. That it is not a formal condition of membership is due to the fact that the NDP is so central to all our work and propaganda, even during a period when we are doing little in the constituency organizations, that anyone coming around us and joining us cannot help but understand that they should hold membership in the NDP. Since formal identification with the LSA almost automatically brings expulsion from the NDP, the extent of public identification that a comrade may have with the LSA is a matter of some concern in the deployment of our forces - who speaks officially on behalf of the LSA, who sells our press and where, and with how much identification, etc., etc.

To say, as do Young and Riddell, that a portion of LSA members do fraction work in the NDP, is an incredible understatement. Revolutioary socialists, if they had the forces, would do fraction work in a

great number of organizations and movements, anywhere and any place where we might get a hearing, including church organizations. We have described our fraction work in the NDP in quite a different way than Young and Riddell now describe it. In the 1970 document we said we conduct "intensive fraction work with a non-split perspective" in the NDP. We do not want to haggle over words but in what way do these words written only three years ago not accurately describe our orientation in this respect? We have no objection to trying to find other, better words to express it, but Young and Riddell's words give quite a false impression of our orientation to the NDP.

In our 1970 document we noted that for a whole period the youth radicalization unfolded outside of the NDP and was only indirectly reflected within it. Thus we noted that our 1966 resolution described the implementation of our orientation as follows: "It means that the NDP remains the focus of all our politics - but not the center of our activities." This remains a generally accurate formulation of our orientation.

To say that " we intervene in the politics of the NDP... within the unions" is formally correct, but it does not accurately explain that intervention. It could truthfully be said by opponents of the NDP, both its scattering of left opponents and its still numerous right wing opponents, that the Trotskyists intervene as supporters of the NDP, even as the best, the most committed supporters of the concept of independent labor, NDP, political action.

Historically, as a social democratic party, the NDP is fated to betray the socialist revolution and thus the working class. Its future betrayal is clearly forecast in its present, making NDPers, as their experiences widen with the crisis of capitalism ever more open to recruitment to Trotskyism. However, in urging union

affiliation, we of necessity have to emphasize good positions in the party program, including good positions taken by the party leadership now, reluctantly or not. We cannot limit ourselves to pie-in-the-sky abstract possibilities that this reformist party has, should the working class flood into the constituency associations and the union political education committees. How else could we carry an argument? It would be quite a feat to argue union affiliation to the NDP if besides its historic position being one of betrayal of the working class, its program, as now understood, and its leadership, were now perceived as bankrupt by any sizeable, viable sector of the working masses. Then, it would indeed be tailism. Today, when the Liberals and Tories still have the adherence of the majority of the working class who concern themselves with politics, to support the NDP is in the framework of revolutionary socialist politics.

Within the NDP itself where our comrades seek to propagandize our transitional and democratic demands we attempt to build a left wing. During the 1966-68 period we were quite successful in gathering leftward moving NDPers around us on a basic minimum program. The Socialist Caucus had 30 to 40 delegates at the 1965 federal convention and its six point program was endorsed by, among others, the senior NDP M.P. Bert Herridge. The Ontario Socialist Caucus at the 1966 convention ran a slate of four candidates for the executive who received 20% of the vote - its candidate for party treasurer also won 20% of the vote. The 1968 Ontario convention Socialist Caucus meeting rallied up to 100 delegates and there were effective formations in both Alberta and BC.

We have described the program of such caucuses in which we played the leading role as being a class struggle program with a socialist perspective. Of course, as Young and Riddell state, our "aim is not to build a

centrist or left centrist current in the NDP." That begs the question. We want a broad class struggle left wing within which we can move and where we can hope to find recruits for the proscribed LSA. What would such a left wing be if it were not "centrist or left centrist" at the very best? What we rejected in the debate with the Red Circle, and the RCT that agreed with them, was the idea of launching a struggle in the NDP designed to regroup what they call revolutionary elements around what they call an explicit, revolutionary program. Not because we are opposed in principle to raising our full program but because at best it would add almost nothing to the forces of the LSA already inside the NDP - it would be a regroupment of "Trotskyists", a pitifully small force struggling against a reformist machine for leadership of a mass labor party.

It is not at all clear what Young and Riddell mean when they say that our aim, that the aim of our tiny forces in the mass labor party formation, "is to increase the working class influence", unless this is some kind of euphemism for increasing the influence of our Marxist program which alone expresses the interests of the working class. After all, the NDP is based on the working class and there is considerable working class weight in it, unfortunately - but it is a fact -by no means exercising a radical influence on NDP policy for some period now. No matter how you examine Young and Riddell's explanation of what they call "our present orientation", in this respect too it is by no means an accurate presentation of what it has been, and as a projection can only disorient our forces.

The slogan "Win the NDP to Socialism" defended in our 1970 document came under heavy attack from the RCT. Its absence from Riddell's and Young's outline of "the present orientation of the LSA/LSO" could be due to a number of reasons. But it is quite clear that

they do not defend it. It has already been pulled down from LSA halls and another substituted in its place: "Fight for socialist policies in the NDP."

Slogans are only approximations and often only express our views for a limited period. The slogan "Fight for socialist policies in the NDP" would appear to be much more in keeping with a tactical attitude to the NDP than what we have called our strategic orientation to the NDP. It is in keeping with a portion of LSA members doing fraction work with a short term split perspective, and not with all LSAers possible holding NDP membership and doing fraction work with a non-split perspective.

In the slogan "Fight for socialist policies in the NDP" could we not just as easily substitute for the letters NDP the name of almost any other organization in which we might have a portion of comrades doing fraction work? This latter slogan contains no concept of how the LSA as an independent and public expression of Trotskyism has always understood the centrality of the NDP to all its work. It gives no guidance to comrades working in the NDP and to persons who may be coming our way. Instead of posing a struggle for the leadership of the class against the liberal-reformist NDP leadership, it poses a fight for undefined policies for an undefined period. As for the RCT's claim that the slogan "Win the NDP to Socialism" appearing on the walls and press of the Trotskyist cadre organization, spreads illusions about the NDP - that we think the NDP actually can make the revolution - is this to be taken any more seriously than claims that many other slogans we have promoted such as "For a Red University", "For a Labor Administration in City Hall", etc. spread illusions about the essential nature of the university and the nature of city hall, a bourgeois institution?

We don't want to haggle over words, but whatever the shortcomings of "Win the NDP to Socialism" the slogan "Fight for Socialist Policies in the NDP" is not a substitute. Quite the contrary. The latter slogan would flow logically from a policy of abandonment of our longstanding orientation to the NDP.

Young and Riddell affirm that our orientation to the NDP is not one of "an entry into the NDP." Elsewhere they say that the Canadian movement is opposed to entry "sui generis". The term entry "sui generis" means an entry of a special type, different from entries into reformist formations that had been established as correct previously by our movement such as Trotsky's proposal that the French comrades enter the French SP, and the experience of the SWP with the Socialist Party of the US in the thirties. The trouble with entry sui generis is that there is no common concept of what it means. It is very difficult to reject out of hand what is called an entry of a special type. What the Canadian Trotskyists rejected was how some Canadian supporters of entry sui generis conceived of it at a certain time in Canada. It turned out that what they proposed we should practise was liquidationism into the reformist labor party. We also rejected it as we came to understand how many of our European comrades practised it for a period.

We have never at any time described or conceived our orientation to the NDP as an entry - either of a special type or as an entry of any other kind. It is an orientation, within which for a time we happened to conduct an entry, but it itself is not an entry into, but an orientation to the NDP.

When the Canadian labor party took on the form of the NDP we actually strengthened and firmed up the public and independent expressions of Canadian Trotskyism to where we now publish a monthly youth paper

and two twice monthly papers, one in English and the other in French.

But having said that, we should not at all pretend that the NDP is just an important work area and that we have had merely a tactical stance to the NDP/CCF now for some two decades. It is within that framework, in harmony with the RCT's line he supports, that Germain attacks our orientation. And we must say that this is the framework accepted by Young and Riddell in their reply. It is quite misleading to pretend that the Canadian Trotskyists have been functioning in their relationship to the labor party formation in their country in much the same way as some other Trotskyist organizations where there are also labor party or social democratic party formations, for instance, in the same way as the International Marxist Group in Great Britain where there is a powerful labor party formation.

The Canadian Trotskyists do not have a relationship to the NDP that parallels in any way the relationship that we understand the IMG has to the British Labor Party. Nearly all comrades belong to the Canadian labor party, some today are very active within it, hold leading posts in it and are not publicly known as members of the LSA/LSO. Because the League is a proscribed organization by the NDP brass, many comrades use pseudonyms in their internal work in the League.

The League does not parade around with the banner of the Fourth International or wave the hammer and sickle at every opportunity. It does not declare here, there and everywhere that it is the Canadian Section of the Fourth International. While it doesn't hide it, it doesn't headline it either, and has followed a policy, while adhering to the line of the Fourth International, of publishing all the official statements

of the Fourth International as information to its readers. It has given up some of the forms of other Trotskyist sections all the better to employ the essence of Trotskyism in the Canadian context.

We should not cloud this question by assuming an "orthodox" front, by presenting our orientation in quite a different frame of reference than it has been. We should communicate our experience to all the sections of the Fourth International as we did by submitting our 1970 document to the world discussion. We should defend our position as it has been.

Young and Riddell, all the more in the light of these comments, may object that their "Some Starting Points for an NDP Debate" with Comrade Germain, is an insufficient document. We agree completely. However, while it is insufficient it is regrettably all that they have given us as to their thinking or the direction of their thinking.

The Young/Riddell document suddenly appearing in the international discussion dealing with a fundamental aspect of our work, over which there has been developing unease during the past year, unhappily confirms our worst fears. Our failure to make any gains from the Waffle left wing experience in the NDP, and the inevitable questioning that this would give rise about our orientation, the increasing pressure of ultraleftism on our movement, the development of an ultraleft current within our ranks which centred its attack on our NDP orientation, posed serious challenges to us. The response of the central leadership, failed to defend our orientation. Rather, our press, with growing frequency, has published a whole series of articles showing a clear trend to a sectarian revision of our line amounting to an abandonment of our orientation.

Although grave damage has been done to our orientation there is still time to call a halt. The red lights are flashing. The comrades who have united in the Labor Party Tendency are alarmed at this process of abandonment of our NDP orientation, the most important acquisition of Canadian Trotskyism, an orientation that remains the fundamental cornerstone of non-sectarian revolutionary politics. We must note that the direction that the LSA/LSO is moving in on this most important question unleashes a certain dynamic - one which will necessarily lead to a qualitative transformation of the LSA/LSO

January, 1974

Two key publications

On the Labor Party

by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Selections from the writings of the two great socialist thinkers outlining the need for the working class to advance from trade union to political consciousness and to build a mass political party of their own. Engels' suggestions to his co-thinkers in North America are particularly relevant today.

Two Manifestoes

Contains a statement, Turn Toward Socialism, addressed by a group of BC provincial executive members to the 1975 provincial convention, which is indeed prophetic in the light of the party's recent setback there. The other, entitled For a Radical, Revitalized NDP, was advanced by a number of prominent NDPers at the Ontario 1975 convention.

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FORWARD BOOKS
53 Gerrard Street West,
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1J2

printed in Canada, April, 1976

Febraury 9, 1974
40 Homewood Ave, #2311
Toronto

Dear Maurice and Cynthia;

Sorry to be so long in taking up your correspondence. The job that I am holding onto in order to qualify for unemployment insurachee and possibly work out some kind of arrangement with the boss for a couple of days a week employment when the fellow I am replacing returns--is taking up all my time. The fact that I work 6 days is very bad . On top of that the day is long--from 7 to 4--and the work is physically hard. Among the many t ings I do is sling around beer kegs. It is almost the same kind of hard physical labor I did on my first job at Canada Packers except that I am now exactly forty years older. I find that I have great difficulty even keeping up with the daily press. I put aside two nighs this week to get at the pile of papers that has been accumultaing and was suprised to find that I had not been able to really read the Toronto Star for over two weeks.

Fortunately the job is almost over---I will know whether they are going to work out a few hours a week for me or not in the next day or so. I also managed to get my appication in for a Canada Council Grant within the deadeline of Feb 1. I managed to work out interviews with both Irving Abella who has manged to carve out a bit of a nitch in the academic community for his book on Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour, and another interview with Joseph Starobin, former international news editor for the US Daily Worker who broke on Czchoslovakia and is on staff at York University. Both of them are enthusiastic about my application for a grant to write up a history of Canadian Trotskyism--Starobin said I should ask for a three year grant of $25,000 The government board will pass along the application to Abella, McNaught and a few others upon whose opinion the decision will be made. Abella thinks that I will be lucky to get a Canada Council grant but should be able to get a grant under the Explorations project which will be initiated sometime this month

The Wendy Stevenson case was reported to the branch last Tuesday. It was presented as a considerable victory. However when we got down to the nitty gritty it turned out to be by no means clear. Under my questioning, Gary summed it up thus- it would appear that a documented record of the history of Trotskyisms relations to the CCF-NDP was prepared for the provincial councio meetigg. This is no doubt a vicious document that can be dragged up at appropriate ocassions to blacken us (I would like very much to get a copy) At this stage the provincial council by a vote of 54 for, to 15 against, reaffirmed its proscription of the LSA made in 1964--I would gather it declared the LSA/LSO an opponent political party and therefore any person known to be a member of the LSA-LSO subject to automatic expulsion. 2nd stage was a motion from the Delta constituency--that the LSA not be conceived by the provincual council as a political party. Gary suggested that this would have been carried by the council delegatss but for some reason not explained to us the leadership was able to get it tabled. The speculation that it would have passed following the previous vote would not appear to be well grounded. The 3rd stage was a motion apparently moved by a George Johnson that Wendy s membership be affirmed. I gather that earlier through some administrative slip she has been granted one. The vote, according to Gary, was 54 for and 4 against. So there we have a person who I have been given to understand is a declared, a public member of the LSA and having here membership affirmed by a meeting which only a short while before reaffirmed the LSA's prosciription.

Your comments on Barrett's bitter attack on the women militants and I take for granted the concept of the ministry, along with Yandle's response are very interesting. I think that it is inevitable that the women's ministry come up again and again, and not only because it is the most moving component of the radicalization but above all because it has imbedded in it what we, in our first healthy reaction, saw, the concept that the party line should be carried by the party's parliamentary spokespersons

Quite an alarmist editorial in the Jan 30 Sun. It would seem to be almost a declaration of despair by the editors--a cry for the formation of some kind of force to ultimately defeat Barrett before it is too late. --an apeal to Liberals Tories and SC's to overcome their rivalries and move towards working out some kind of coalition.. Of course it is very good for Barrett --he can use it effectively against any left critics---to undermine them as not seeing how the wind is blowing. It stands in staggering contrast to what we say about the NDP energy policy in the Feb 4 Labor Challenge. The Star gives front page to Barrett's statements for public ownership of gas and oil as a matter of public emergency and the TV carries Lewis advocating public ownership of the natrual resources industries, columnists wisecrack about the NDP forcing Trudeau to reverse his field on the energy question—— and we carry a double spread article that searches out every contradiction and weakness in the NDP brass's statements to establish them as sell-out artists. Hard to understand what the Marlon is trying to prove with the statement that Douglas and Schreyer rejected nationalization in contrast to a poll that has NDP supporters being 68% for it. Of course Douglas and even Schreyer were to smart to reject it as such --they oppose it, as they would say, being posed as a panacea

I am wondering when some comrades are going to start to protest the line of LC? I mean comrades other than those already openly identifying themselves with the LPT. The lines are rigid in my Toronto branch. Last meeting Claire made a lengthy contribution during the discussion on the Compass current position in the international dispute on the concept of labor government vrs bourgeois governments which we now call such governments as Barrett's. I think there was only one other contribution from the floor and it was as if Claire had not uttered a word. Your words that Dowson is the one thing that stands in their way are very flattering--but are also an awful comment on the state of

I see they have finally got the LPT document out---of course thyy have made movement no decision with regards to discussion.

Yes of course they are trying to draw the sharpest line of demarcation against the LPT with the Young/Dowson bulletin. Imagine my suprise when Art phones me to ask me to stand as IEC member at the world congress. I told him that I thought the Dowson-Young bulletin played into Mandel's hands very nicely--how you have Dowson affirming the RCT-RMG claim about the degeneration of the LSA/LSO--right up his alley for demanding that the RMG be given equal recognition with the LSA/LSO . Art stumbled and stammered. It would seem obvious to me to pose them with real contrdictions---which they may well be aware of, of course, with Art making the phone call just for the record. Like lawyers they make all kinds of 'for the record' moves.

I read the statement that you drafted and planned to distribute to the branch. What was the basis of Nic's opposition ? You give my no inkling. I have not heard anything from Nick for a longtime and hear nothing about Ren or Bob Sims--are the latter two still in the branch.? Off hand I would see no reason at all why you should not send it into the CO.

The Dowson-Young exchange appears in a bulletin without my agreement. On a Friday afternoon I arrived home from work to find the record of my contribution as taken from a tape along with a note that it had to be in the CO by noon on Saturday---and I am punching the clock at work at 7 that morning. I wrote them a note and told them that they should publish it just as it came off the tape --that I was unprepared to collaobrate under such conditions. Of course Art's contribution was well prepared in advance---mine is completely extemporaneous and under bad conditions---I had worked all day and had only managed to get to that evenings sessions. A couple of nights ago Joan handed me some more of the plenum transcript covering my participation. It covers various responses I made to running heckling and chanllenges from Dick, John and others. Never one for running from a fight I responded. Because of time limitations I actually dumped my prepared, more or less prepared, contributions in order to respond to the situation. That is how whatever I said about correspondence with Cynthia came out. Unfortunately I do not actually recall what I did say--but it was nothing--probably about your sending me a copy of the pamphlet--Jacquie made some ohs and ah's --but after all I am the

Chairman of the LSA/LSO. If I had planned to say anything you can be sure I would have told you. If they try to make anything of it I would just laugh--after all Dowson is the league chairman--something terrible, to write him a note

At last night's East branch meeting I recalled your comment that Jacquie's report "erected the routine activities which we all take as given into priorities." The single sales campaign was designed by the executive to be the enterpeice of the meeting--everyone of those comrades being puhed forward as leaders spoke on our selling our bundle of 100 copies. The educational was the LTF political resolution--the key documents of the world congress. There was in effect no discussion

Incidentalty Thorstad has drawn up a Gay Marxist manifesto. I should probably have a chance to read one of the copies in town here within a few days. You might write and ask John W to see it.

comradely

Ross Dowson

Toronto, Feb. 18th, 1974

To the Members of the LSA/LSO and YS/LJS:

With this statement, the undersigned, in their majority long-standing members, announce their resignation from the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière, the Young Socialists/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes, and consequently the Labour Party Tendency.

As partisans of a Fourth International, and as activists in the struggle to build a revolutionary socialist vanguard organization, which alone can assure the victory of the socialist revolution in Canada, we have concluded that we can no longer achieve this aim within the confines of the LSA/LSO or YS/LJS.

The LSA/LSO has degenerated into a sect. This is the result of adaptation to the ultra-left pressures of the new radicalization which have developed both in the Canadian political arena and which are tearing at the vitals of the component organizations of the Fourth International.

This sectarian course first found overt political expression some two years ago in the dumping of the 1968 convention resolution, Canada-U.S. Relations - a socialist viewpoint. This document had enabled us to meet the challenge of the anti-imperialist sentiment developing in an anti-Canadian capitalist direction, which placed us in a position to meet the challenge of the development of a new Canadian nationalism. This stands in stark contrast to our present position which has made it impossible to relate to this key aspect of the current radicalization.

This sectarian trend has since encompassed all the historic positions of Canadian Trotskyism. Some of the basic positions of Vive Le Quebec Libre have been revised. Our work in Women's Liberation has become unhinged. And finally, our long-standing orientation to the NDP, the touchstone of non-sectarian revolutionary politics in Canada, has been subverted.

As members of the Labor Party Tendency, we challenged the central leadership of the LSA/LSO to halt the clear trend towards a sectarian revision of our strategic orientation to the mass labor party. In face of their denial of any such change we provided the 1974 plenum with a document detailing the sectarian drift of Labor Challenge, as well as the failure of the organizational and executive secretaries to defend our positions against ultra-left attacks on our NDP orientation, both from the Revolutionary Communist Tendency and from the international leadership.

At that plenum a major figure in the central leadership of the League openly attacked the 1970 convention document. Among other things, he contended it led to misunderstandings that are "in large part responsible for the long record of confusion and adaptation of our work in the NDP, particularly in the Waffle experience." Also the concept was introduced and actually adopted by the CC, that the NDP, "a social democratic labor party", upon election, is not a labor government challenged by the contradictions of having to administer a government serving in a bourgeois state apparatus. Although we urged its election to office as a party, in government, as a "bourgeois government", we are irreconcilably opposed to it. The result of this thinking is to make our task of winning the working class from reformism more difficult, if not impossible.

This wholesale abandonment of our political positions in a sectarian direction has had its parallel in the revision of our organizational concepts.

The leadership of the League has taken on the character of a clique. With the development of internal differences it has generated an extreme factionalism. It has become impossible to hold out any hope of influencing and halting the plunge into sectarian isolation.

For our part we declare we stand on the general line of all the basic documents of the movement and its general practice up to and including the 1968 and 1970 convention positions, and including the 1971 plenum document entitled, The NDP and the Waffle.

We consider ourselves to be continuing in the tradition of the Canadian Trotskyist movement. We intend to move forward and develop these traditions in a new organization. Hopefully, as a result of future political experiences, we will once again find ourselves in a united Trotskyist movement. Until then, life itself will be the judge of our political paths.

Signed:	Gord D	Wayne R	Lynda D
	Jim M	Roz D	Alice K
	Julie T	Abie W	Jim C
	Pat S	John D	Jane C
	Ross D	Ellie K	Harry K
	Dale R	Gus T	Sabena K

Correspondence with

James M . 2205
40 Homewood Ave.,
Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2K2

924-9860

Tuesday Feb 19, 1974

SWP

Dear Jack (Barnes)

Last night a group of comrades, including myself, decided to quit the LSA/LSO.

I would imagine that you would want to cut off this mailing coming to my place.

with socialist greetings

Ross Dowson

Febraury 25, 1974

Dear Jane (E.Z)

Just a few lines in response to your letter received here this morning and until we see one another again somewhwere, somehow.

I think that you give too much weight to many incidents that are running through your mind. Of course I listened very closely to what you said to me but what you said by no means was interpreted by me as escorting me to the door as I left the leauge, as you put it.

You are quite mistaken in your comment about the 18 comrades who decided to continue the work that they joined the league to do, outside of the league. They and I by no means have concluded that you comrades in the league are not worth our consideration or are a bunch of yahoos. Not at all.

The 18 comrades who spoke their mind on Febraury 17th and those who came together on the 18th to draw up their statement of resignation ,could have decided to move from a tendency to form a faction and start a fight for the leadership. They were of the opinion that to do that at this stage would have been counter-productive, that it would have been demoralizing for all concerned--particularly when you consider how the central office comrades conduct a tendency fight, not to speak of a faction fight.

So we took a decision for ourselves. We decided to continue the work that we joined the league for-from outside of the league..to continue it with a new organization but the same old program. From now on life itself is going to be the test of the wisdom of that decision. Comrades who have drawn certain conclusions now will have an opportunity to reconsider as we have more experiences.

comradely

Ross Dowson

Febraury 25, 1974
Toronto

Dear Cynthia and Maurice;

A few lines, immediate ones, in response to your hurried query of the 21st.

Of course the decision wasn't mine. It was the decision of some 18 comrades ~~Y~~ Feb 17th, and will be the decision of more . The RMG gossipers have it up to 40 and sharing the headquarters at 334 Queen W. The 18 are very important comrades. On the 19th having got word somehow, Joan N and Gary P came to my door. Gary and Joan started off ~~thmkmxm~~ ~~xmmmmtm~~ by stressing their alarm;;;;;this walk- out is totally different and much more significant than that of the RMG--most of them had had little or nothing to do with Canadian Trotskyism, were actually aliens--but the 18 contain key cadre elements of the Canadian movement. Of course I agreed with this observation --which is quite the opposite to what they had been saying for the last two years.

It was these comrades who made the decision. After all I am 57, in good health and excellent moral but not exactly prepared to start off more or less alone, as in 1942. These comrades ,along with myself, made a very simple judgement---that in their opinion the revolutionary vanguard party cannot be built within the confines of the LSA/LSO.

They could have declared themselves a faction and launched an all-out struggle for the leadership of the LSA/LSO. However having had several ~~tates~~ and several long draughts of the factionalism that the present leadership generates in a tendency struggle, they felt that such a struggle would be ~~c~~onter-productive. In their opinion the strategic orientation of Canadian Trotskyism to the NDP has already been dumped--not only by the press behind the backs of the membership , but even before the debate gets underway in the ~~xxxxx~~ Bonbox It is already so far developed that the decision has in effect been made . As you know the plenum adopted John S' report that contains the concept never before expressed on any level of the movement for examination by the members--that the Barrett government is a bourgeois government, not essentially different from the Bennett government before it. Dick F in two ~~xxxx~~ contributions attacked the LPT document largely because it stood on the 1970 document--Our Orientation to the NDP--as a strategy and its tactical application. Not one member of the central committee expressed a word of dissent. Ernie Tate, ~~xxxx~~ as a Canadian IEC ~~xxxxxxxxx~~representative and Vern as a member of the Control Commission were both there. Ernie was shocked and took the floor to make a good contribution. Vern's worst fears were affirmed. When they talked of reproducing my extemporaneous comments made on the run in response to heckling and challenges from the fllor, I protested, and suggested that they reproduce Vern,'sErnie's and Dicks contributions--to no avail.

If you think that the revolutionary vanguard cannot be built within the confines, through the LSA/LSO--where and how can it be built--?you must ask yourself! Of course we reject the RMG brand of Trotskyism which rejects the whole present and past of the Canadian movement. And we dont accept the Lambertist (Labor Action) brand of Trotskyism

In my opinion you have the responsiblity to commence where the LSA/LSO went off the rail, approximately three years ago. I have been in a struggle on the PC plane since then, other comrades on the Metro executive or branch executive plane or the branch in the intervening period. At the Feb 17 LPT meeting everyone expressed their thoughts. One comrades thought it not possible with the forces at our disposal, another thought it premature and antoehr expressed uncertainty. But all the rest said let us carry on with a new organization to do what we started when we first came to Trotskyism. I am with them and will do all I am able to help them. Tonite the new organization will be structured--named, make moves to get a headquarters and buy a press, elect a provisional leadership.

I will write later comradely Ross Dowson

yes, I will write the history. you can be sure

Ross Dowson # 2511
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2

March 3, 1976

Ivan Awakumovic
Department of History
U.B.C.

Dear Sir;

A few weeks ago in the course of a discussion with Irving Abella at Glendon, York University, he told me that you are working on a study of the Communist Party of Canada. I was talking to him with regards to my application for a grant from the Canada Council so that I could work on a history of the Canadian Trotskyist movement, a highly related subject.

In my discussion with Abella about certain aspect of his work , Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labor, he informed that he was unfamiliar with the Trotskyist press and its analysis of many matters that he dealt with. I am wondering if you are familiar with the Vanguard, Labor Challenge and Workers Vanguard. A couple of years ago I deposited with the Toronto Public Library(Reference-Baldwin Room) a coppleta file of the Trotskyistex press--from the period of Maurice Spector and Jack MacDonald's editorship through to today. Regretabbly William Rodney in his valuable contribution Soldiers of the International was unaware of the Vanguard which expressed the views and related the activites of both Spector and MacDonald follwoing their expusion from the Canadian CP. These papers are on microfilm , copies of which could be obtained by the UBC library. Needless to say the Trotskyist press made a running analysis of CP policy for this whole period.

Jospeh Starobin with whom I have also had some discussions has informed me that he had been taping a series of interviewswith among others Stewart Smith. In passing I mentioned Smith's book Socialism and the CCF (pseud.G Peirce) Starobin had heard of it but neither he nor Smith had a copy of this important book. It happens to be the most complete expression of Third Period Stalinism as related to Canada. I have loaned im my copy. Are you familier with this project that Starobin is working on--in collaboration with Abella. I have asked Starobin to enquire of Smith whether he would make his memoirs available to me.

A few words about myself. I have been associated with the Canadian Trotskyist movement since about 1936,was executive secretary of the League for Socialist Action until last spring and for a long time editted the Canadian Trotskyist press. including those days when Tito broke with the Kremlin and we hoped for big things of the Yugoslav Communists. Perhaps we can exchange some useful information.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

March 3, 1974

Toronto

Dear Jane; (E)?.

I was glad to receive your afterthoughts--from your previous letter.

Yes, I will never forget the debate that developed in our branch around the day care question following Gary Porter's statement. How long ago was it !--- one of what became a whole series of turns away from our traditions

It would seem that one of the characteristics of ultra lefts, shared by the Stalinists, is their denial that Marxism is an integral part of the humanistic tradition. It was in answer to those pressures in the SWP that George Novack wrote his excellent essays on Marxism and humanism . Have you managed to read them !

But you write as if I were dead--or only a memory--when I am alive and well- and this morning looking for a headquarters. I left the league so that I could continue to be what I am

sincerely

Ross Dowson

March 6, 1974
40 Homewood Ave, #2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Dear Charlie

Just a note to ~~xxxx~~ tell you a bit about some correspondence that I received from Maurice Flood of Vancouver ~~xxxxx~~

Maurice thought that the Mitchell-Weisfeld, Roberts docuement "is an excellent and admireable defence-exposition of the traditional Trotskyist approach to class politics in Canada."

It would appear that John Steele and a few others feel that it is essential that they try to carry some kind of discussion on ~~xxxxxx~~ our NDP orientation despite the fact that they have done everything in their power for some two years now to block ~~xxxxx~~ such a discuss on and subvert our line. According to Maurice "(Steele has worked very hard on Nic Shugalo going to the extent of offering to work with him in the development of his views '!!. Like you working with Watler Davis in preparation of an RCT document.'

Maurice's letters are of course between Maurice and myself ~~xxxxx~~ and should be handled in the strictest confidence, however I feel confident that you two, being in essentially the same situation should be in touch with one another. For instance Maurice should know that you are rewriting the Mitchell-Weisfeld-Roberts document for submission to any bulletin that the League may circulate. They should know that ,but not in anyway to stop Nic and Maurice writing something from their end.

Maurice' address is -1020 Nicola Apt 10, Vancouver 5
Nick Shugalo's is 2161--West 54th Street, Vancouver 14

The name we chose last night is Socialist League. We are now prowling the streets for a headquarters and preparing to pick up such equipment as a top flite typewriter for reproduction purposes and a press of some kind. Made important moves to structure ourselves too last night.

comradely

Ross Dowson

carbon copy to Maurice

March 15, 1974
Rosa Dowson # 2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2

The Canada Council
Ottawa

Dear Mr. Robert M Kennedy

With regards to your letter dated March 12 related to my enquiry about the Explorations program, and your request that I supply a brief description of my project before you send me an application form. for a grant.

On January 31, 1974 I submitted by registered letter an application for a Research Grant to the Humanities and Social Sciences Division of the Canada Council. I received aknowledgement on February 7 and was given the number 574 - 0279.

Before submitting my application for a Humanities Grant I consulted both Irving Abella and Joseph Starobin of York University, Glendon Campus. I am qualified to do serious research and write on a wide area of Canadian socio-cultural concerns but they both urged me to center on a History of Canadian Trotskyism. They consider me uniquely qualified to fill in this serious gap in the areas that they, along with such authorities as Ivan Avakumovic at the University of British Columbia and William Rodney at Royal Roads Military College, Victoria B.C. have been working on.

At the same time Professor Abella suggested that I should check out the Explorations Grants. He thought that the Humanities and Social Sciences grants laid particular stress on research and writing by persons within the academic milieu--with which I have no formal connection. He suggested that it might be advisseable to submit an application for an Explorations grant also.

I would hope that those in charge of the Humanities and Social Sciences grants, if for some reason they felt that my application did not fall within their terms of reference , would turn it over with a recommendation to those in charge of the Explorations Grants. However I have no way of knowing if this is practiced and would not want to have my application suspended between the two projects.

It was on this basis that I have decided to submit an application for an explorations grant--not of course to ibtain a double grant but to assure that my application gets into the right hands for evaluation.

I would appreciate your assessing my application number 574 - 0279, and of course your sending me the application for an Explorations Grant as I am anxious to be in a position to seriously come to grips with the project as soon as possible.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

March 19, 1974

Ross Dawson ✓ 2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Ivan Avakumovic
Vancouver

Dear Avakumovic;

It is good news to hear that you have a 500 page study of Communism in Canada already almost completed in manuscript form.

The Rodney book was an event to be sure- after the dull years of performances by Buck-Agathan and company. Your contribution is to be much anticipated particularly because of what would appear from your few comments to me your grater empathy with the theme and the dramatis personae

I am particularly pleased to hear that you are acquainted with Labor Challenge and Workers Vanguard over a wide period--not so much for what I or my co-thinkers might have said at the time but because it would inevitably lead you to investigate the Fergus McKean episode, the Salsberg Soviet anti-semitism incident and even Kolasky and Ukrainian nationalism.

With regards to my own projected work I would like particularly to follow, develop and analyze several key themes--among them; 1) the problem posed by the relaive isolation of communists from the working class, including those strata which are prepared to move out and even struggle around democratic and reformist demands , and their attempts to grapple with it---the Canadian Labor Party experience in the twenties, the challenge of the CCF in the thirties, forties and fifties, and then the NDP, and (2) the nature of the Canadian economy, the Canadian capitalist class and the Canadian state, and their relation to Britain and the United States--the so-called struggle for "Canadian independence." In this respect J. Carter's article "The Work of the Canadian CP Between the 6th and 7th Congresses of the CI" appearing in the CI Volume XII, No. 8, with its attack on MacDonald and Spector and its advice to the new leadership in the wake of the Communist International is particularly interesting.

There are many gaps in the material available. I am wondering if in your investigations you came across a file of The Canadian Labour Monthly, edited by Spector and then by Bruce. I am most anxious to examine such a file. And did you chance to come across copies of the underground CP press of the early forties ? I Inquire by accident one of the staff of the Toronto reference library pulled out a box containing several issues--which were of course not listed on their index.

Yes, should I get the grant one of the first things I must do is to visit you for some extended discussions and if possible examine your manuscript.

sincerely

Ross Dawson

April 17, 1974
40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Vancouver

Dear Dick (Jarmain)

I was suprised to see that over a month has passed by since I received your letter and sent on a copy of our statement. A very busy month and a half grubbing for a living, helping the comrades of the Socialist League set up a headquarters, structure an onrganization and get moving as an operation.

But now we have a series of public forums underway and have a very successful social under our belt. We had just short of 100 at the social last Saturday nite, quite a few from the League--the majority of the St Kitts branch and local, it looked to me like the majority of the Labor Action group--Don Graham, Middleton and others. The atmosphere was very good. Oh yes there were several RMGers including Joe Flexer along with Stu Sincliar who you ~~kmaw~~ probably ~~he~~ know left the League with the RMG but has since dropped to what could be called syampthizer of the RMG. The RMG consider us to the right, themselves to be on the left and the LSA/LSO in the middle--but they dismiss the LSA as having no principled positions and oursev selves at least being principled though ~~rightm~~ on the right

The other day the RMG wrote a letter to the LSA telling them that they wanted us involved in some decision of joint concern , including us in the "Trotskyist family." Right now we are in the process of organizing what we have called a Trade Union Circle which we hope will permit those who consider themseves to be Trotskyists union militants to get together to discuss union problems, exchgne experiences. We are hoping that the various RMGers, LSAers and SLers and unattached frieds will be able to come together without fighting for organizational advantage. Joe Meslin and Andre Beckerman will be participating. ~~kmam~~ We are initating it through three Douglas shop Trotskyists---Hugh Dowson who is in the SL, Stu Sincliar with his good will from the RMG and Bill Martin of the LSA. Thefirst common meeting is slated for next Tuesday so we will see .

I think we are gradually working out the camp. I have not signed over the property from my name until we have a corpoation set-up I proposed all worked out to everyone's statisfaction. The LSA was quite disturbed when I told themthat I was not at all prepared to sign the property over to an edcuational society controlled by their PC. The key question involved is the community character of the operation including the lodge which was set up largely with your generous help. The LSA is finding it hard to live with us but live with us they must. We proposed a joint LSA/RMG/SL May Day action--if only a meeting--they invited us to occupy chairs in a meeting they have invited Tom Kerry to address. The RMG is now very late in the day trying to work out something else that will have some solidarity sese to it but it seems toop late in the day

The reason for our leaving the LSA/LSO is very simple. The last two and a half years of struggle in the LSA/LSO convinced me that my belief that the task of gathering the revoluionaty vanguard necessary to make the revolution in Canada would take place under the aegis of the LSA/LSO proved to be wrong--it has deteriorate into a sect. In the Trnsitional Prgram the Old Man wrote "Bolshevik Leinists, without waste of time, calmly leave these groups to their own fate."

Date ?- (Post 1974)

And that is just what the comrades of the SL have decided to do--to conduct themselves as Trotskyists as best they can and let life itself go to work on the various problems. You might well have been suprised by the 18 making their decision but the Riddell-Young leadership of the League has no basis at all to be suprised by our action. In fact they are its inspirers. And the situation in the LSA has by no means yet worked itself out. Since the 18 left, the Labor Party Tendency I understand has been reconstituted--both in Vancouver, in Toronto and St Catherines. It would appear that some comrades still want to carry the struggle on in the LSA whereas the 18 concluded that it was counter-productive--no one was convincing anyone, a lot of time and energy was being wasted and a tremendous alienation developing due to persistant manipulation and maneuvering.

In relation to the last comment, a couple of weeks ago, after a couple of months while in the LSA of attempting to participate in a serious discussion about Toron to teacher work to no avail--I managed to have a very cool and serious discussion with two LSA members on this area of work. I went over to one of their homes to meet someone with whom I would go out to put up posters for the Edlestrom meeting. While waiting for the person--who he was well over an hour delayed--I opened a talk on the line of Teachers Actioh. I told Ned Dimytrichyn and Joe K that I thought the paper (T Actic was wrong in making a loyalty oath to the Teachers Federation which could only really be called a company union--that the caucus whose line the LSA was determining could not just talk on program but had to take on the OSSTF leadership and expose its class collaborationist character. When I raised these matters in the LSA while in the LSA they were always hoplessly distorted to mean that I was urging a call for a union outside of the OSSTF etc etc. At that little discussion with two leading LSAeactivists--with me outside of the league they seemed to be able to listen to me. Of course I have no way of knowing if that was politness that they may think necessary to a person outside of the league but not to a person inside of the league ---or whether I was actually getting an exchange of ideas I do not know. I see the last issue of LC has an evaluation of the OSSTF convention --they still do not mention the leadership problem except at one little point they refer to the office mandarins . Of course Liz Barday's vote was double the presidential candidates vote because each delegate had two votes to cast and they obviously plumpted.

Lots of gossip about the LSA and the RMG going the rounds--but frankly I am not too interested, for while ultimately there will have to be a unification of all Trotskyists--it is a little way down the road and will require some experiences --good ones. So far all the experiences with the LSA are negative in this respect and there has to be more sorting out in the RMG

It is good to know that there are more persons calling themselves Trotskyists than ever before in Canada--the leadership, the cadre problem which we inherited with the Stalinization of the Comintern did not allow us to resolve this at this stage in the LSA-LSO. It will be resolved in someother way . Riddell's lie in Labor Challenge about the SL giving up the struggle to build a Trotskyist cadre organization doesn't help---but that is Riddell-LSA problem.

with Trotskyist greetings

Ross Dowson

(From page 19 of an April 1974 Internal Bulletin)

COMMENTS ON THE CHARACTER OF THE NDP AND NDP GOVERNMENTS

by Ross Dowson

(The following comments on the character of the New Democratic Party, and of NDP governments, form part of Ross Dowson's summary comments in the plenum discussion of the NDP, popular frontism, and the positions of the Labor Party Tendency. The comments have not been edited by the speaker.)

...I'm very uneasy that comrades suddenly have it revealed to them that the NDP is to be called a social democratic party. We talked about that in the 1951 document, "The CCF, Our Tasks and Perspectives." We talked about what the CCF was. It was no longer permissible, we said, for comrades to attempt to estimate the CCF and let ourselves and the party – we called ourselves the Revolutionary Workers Party at the time — be guided by ready-made formulae, such as "social-democratic," "reformist," "political support of the bourgeoisie," "third party of the bourgeoisie." We (questioned) the merit of this.

Then we went on to say that there was a lengthy passage by Trotsky to our French comrades as to whether these definitions were correct, when applied to the French Socialist Party in 1934. Trotsky answered, both yes and no. Pretty wishy-washy; he didn't stand up and be counted! He said, "Rather no than yes. The impossibility of applying henceforth the simple customary definition is, of itself, the unmistakable expression of the fact that we have here to (deal) with a centrist party."

He talked about this party no 1onger being what we thought it was. It is a centrist party. "Which as a consequence of the rapid evolution of the country, still retains its two poles as sharpest contradictions. One would have to be a hopeless scholastic in order to be prevented by the label, 'Second International'" — that's the label Brett Smiley (later a supporter of the RTC—ed.) threw on the NDP, you see — "from seeing what is actually taking place. Only a dialectical definition of the Socialist Party, above all, a concrete appraisal of its internal dynamics, can give the Bolshevik-Leninists the possibility of drawing up a correct perspective" — Trotsky used the word perspective — "and of adopting an active, and not a waiting policy." An active policy!

Well, comrades, our policy is an active policy with relation to the NDP.

I don't know what all this is about, these comrades here who are talking about it as some revelation that I now admit that the NDP is a social democratic party. We never said it was other than a social democratic party. But we said that it was not too useful. Maybe yes, maybe no, possibly less no rather than more yes!

It's one thing to define the NDP formally in broad categories. It's another thing to know how to take an approach to it, to know the perspective that your movement has for it.

I hope you document what you said about the B.C. government being a bourgeois government. I hope you document this. As we start to discuss that, we will come to grips with what the implications of that are. I don't know why we would support the NDP if it's a bourgeois government. Why we would identify ourselves with it in the next election. You've got this transition: we support the party, the party as a whole — but we don't support the leadership, and we don't support the program. But when it gets elected, we suddenly don't support it because it's a bourgeois government! I don't think we're going to support a bourgeois government. I'm not! If the League took that position, comrades, I would break. If we would support a bourgeois government.

I don't think it's useful, comrades, to call a NDP government a bourgeois government. It's useless to call it that. It doesn't tell us anything about where the class struggle is, where the radicalization is unfolding, where the possibilities are to build this movement.

I say that the formulation that the NDP in B.C., or anywhere it is a government, that it is a bourgeois government, is not a useful formulation, Comrade Young. Is the NDP a social democratic party, or is it not? It is, and it is not. That's my answer, Comrade Riddell. It's a labor party! …

(Undated pamphlet found in April 1974)

THE SOCIALIST LEAGUE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR A SOCIALIST CANADA

Published by the Socialist League, 85 King St. E., Toronto 363-6755

The wave of the youth radicalization that swept across Canada in the past decade has made many attempts to overcome the deeply rooted crises of capitalist society and to replace it with socialism. Both during this period and earlier, revolutionaries who are now gathered together in the Socialist League have tried to give political direction to the growing consciousness of the Canadian working people and their allies in the traditions of Marxism.

The New Wave of Radicalism in Canada

The Canadian radicalization reflects the crisis of capitalism not only in Canada but throughout the world. The Vietnamese and Cuban revolutions inspired a new generation with anti-imperialist consciousness on a world-wide scale. In Canada, this revulsion directed chiefly against US imperialism led many to view Canada as part and parcel of the US-dominated world imperialist system.

Trotskyists in Canada participated in the building of the mass movements against the shameless and satellitic complicity of the Canadian government in Vietnam. This anti-imperialist sentiment, initially based in the student movement, proceeded to influence the mass organizations of the Canadian working people, expressing itself in demands for independence from the pro-imperialist American trade union brass and in the development of a desire for democratically run unions responsive to the needs of Canadian workers. This anti-imperialist sentiment swept right into the heart of the union-based New Democratic Party where the Waffle developed as the fusion of the Canadian youth radicalization with politicized layers of the working class.

The Challenge Before Canadian Socialists

The continuing crisis of Canadian capitalism, expressed in runaway inflation, unemployment, rising taxes, cutbacks in the public sector and education, and the housing crisis is daily drawing wider layers of Canadians into the arena of politics. The phenomenal growth of the NDP, demonstrated by the presence of NDP governments in three provinces and the fielding of expanded slates for provincial elections in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, dramatically points up the growing possibilities opening up for revolutionary socialists.

But the revolutionary left, in a state of disunity and discord, has failed to develop a successful strategy to reach the mass of Canadian workers. The crisis of leadership in the workers' movement and in the revolutionary left has meant that most Canadians look upon the NDP as the only practical alternative to the rule of big business. The NDP — not the organizations of the

radical left — constitutes the only mass, organized, political expression of the aspirations of Canadian workers for independent working-class political action today and for some time to come.

The NDP, however, is dominated by a liberal-reformist leadership which is parliamentarist and opportunist. This leadership, although capable of moving to the left under mass pressure, has the limited perspective of reforming a system which cries out for replacement.

Problems of the Canadian Left

At present, the revolutionary left is isolated from the mass of newly radicalized workers. The Waffle, which emerged as the broadest and most dynamic current within the radicalization, has done much to pose the socialist solution to Canada's economic problems, especially those related to Canada's domination by US imperialism. But the Waffle's outright rejection of the NDP in its entirety blocks it from ever developing a mass base. Thus, the Waffle has erected an unbreachable organizational barrier to the mass, pan-Canadian audience which previously was most responsive to its politics.

The sectarianism inherent in the Waffle's rejection of the NDP is a generally recurring problem of the revolutionary left in Canada. The unevenness of the radicalization has resulted in the more advanced elements and organizations searching for shortcuts to the working class and rejecting the NDP in the process.

But in Canada today, the rejection of the NDP does not mean the rejection of liberal-reformism; rather it means isolation from the millions of Canadian workers who are just beginning to express their developing class consciousness through identification with independent labor political action through the NDP.

Need for a Transitional Program

In order to make a mass intervention in the Canadian workers' movement, revolutionaries require an interventionist strategy in the NDP. Such an approach stands against the abandonment of a revolutionary orientation and for the adoption of a transitional program and strategy in the tradition of Leon Trotsky's founding program for the Fourth International. With this program and strategy, revolutionary socialists seek to meet the needs of Canadian workers in terms of immediate demands and of those demands which will carry them into struggles which challenge the entire capitalist system.

The activists who came together to found the Socialist League have followed this strategy for many years. In the women's liberation movement, the student movement, the Quebec independence movement and trade union movement, we have fought for a program capable of mobilizing mass independent struggles in the streets. Far from posing an obstacle to working class action, the NDP has served to focus the need for independent labor political action within our transitional strategy. On many important occasions, we have united with New Democrats in

the struggle for a socialist program and leadership while simultaneously gathering revolutionary cadres into an independent Leninist organization with a perspective of revolutionary change.

The Socialist League

In this approach, the Socialist League stands firmly on the historical positions of Marx and Lenin. We are, in our majority, longstanding former members of the League for Socialist Action/La Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO), the traditional organization of Canadian Trotskyism affiliated to the Fourth International.

We resigned from the LSA/LSO because of its sectarian degeneration.

This degeneration was the result of a two-year process in which all the sections of the Fourth International, including its highest bodies, were subjected to an all-out assault from ultraleftist pressure emanating from the immature young radicals which had recently found their way to the tiny nucleus of cadres that constituted the Fourth International. The LSA leadership failed to answer the challenge of the ultralefts but instead adapted to it, especially as mass mobilizations of key sectors of the radicalization began to decline.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group represents an ultraleft current which crystallized within the LSA (as an extension of the international current). Its sectarian approach to politics does not flow out of its adherence to the principles of Trotskyism but rather to its immaturity.

Although it cannot be said that the disagreements among the Trotskyist currents represent differences of fundamental theoretical principles of Marxism, the differences on the plane of intervention are real nonetheless. For example, the LSA has rejected as a principle the nationalist mood that has taken hold of virtually every sector of the radicalization. Despite the clearly anti-imperialist roots of this sentiment, and its anti-capitalist direction, the LSA leadership has dismissed this nationalist mood as reactionary in all its forms and expressions.

Even more significantly, the LSA has dumped it's longstanding strategic orientation to the NDP. We do not place conditions on our support to the NDP because we are attempting to build broad left wings within the party directed against the NDP leadership's lack of a socialist perspective or program. Although this position is what distinguished the Trotskyists from every other current operating in the milieu of Canadian working-class politics, the LSA has carried out concentrated sectarian attacks on the NDP as a whole in its retreat from recognizing the NDP as the touchstone of mass class politics.

And the revision of the LSA's positions on these key questions is part of a more widespread revision of its approach to other questions as well. This has been the conclusion of the LSA's adaptation to ultraleftism.

The founding members of the Socialist League carried on an extended effort to prevent the LSA from pursuing its sectarian course. The Socialist League was formed after it became obvious that this process could not be halted. The Socialist League intends to continue to develop

within the framework of the political traditions of the LSA, as they were developed over three decades before they were dumped.

The Socialist League is a democratic centralist organization which views its main tasks as gathering cadres for the future mass revolutionary party. In this sense, the Socialist League is the legitimate continuator of Canadian Trotskyism, going back to the founding of the Communist Party in 1921.

For a World Party of Revolution

We are internationalists to the core despite the present state of disunity within the world revolutionary socialist movement. Therefore, we remain partisans, for a Fourth international and for the reunification of Trotskyist forces on a principled basis after differences have been tested in practice.

The radicalization in Canada is deepening and broadening. We intend to be an integral part of mass future struggles as they find expression in the labor movement, in the women's movement, on the campuses, and in the NDP. In so doing, we will work in unity with all individuals and groups engaged in the mass movements to build a socialist Canada in a socialist world.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

SOCIALIST LEAGUE

85 King Street East

3rd floor

Toronto

M5C IG3

Phone: 363-6755

May 3, 1974
Toronto

Vancouver
Dear Maurice and Cynthia

Hard to believe that almost a month has slipped by since receiving your last letter. A month of little things, nothing significant or noteworhty achieved. The radicalization here seems becalmed. The union militancy is being [redacted] and absorbed by such concessions as the Ontario government has given to the hospital workers and the Trudeau regime to civil servants. Acollosal development in Portugal! Once again a guerrilla struggle brings down an ancient regime. and poses the challenge of revolution to Europe. The Portuguese CP and SP make words favoring independence of the colonies but their failure to force the withdrawal of Portuguese forces opens wide the door for neo-colonialism to take advantage of the primitiveness of the Angolese and Mozambique revolutionairies and their new difficulties.

Of course the Socialist League is finding itself. It has put out a series of leaflets one for the Edelstrom meeting here, another to a large NDP meeting on housing, another on the Middle East for a large TCLPAC meeting, etc. It is having some good internal discussions, ..a series of three on Quebec dealing with the nature of nationalism in Quebec, the class structure of Quebec society. John D. and myself will probably be writing them up preparatory to our working out a documented position on Quebec. Next Thursday we will be having our first public formum---one of three before the summer hits us and we revert to more modest classes. Our social came off well---about 100 turned up and for the first time the music was under control so that one could dance and talk according to choice. All the Lambertists came out, a scattering of LSAers, including a few from out of town --St Kits, Kitchener, and a few RMGers...and of course many of the old LSA periphery.

We managed to get what we call a trade union circle (help) off the ground. About 20 unionists probably even more, turned up. ..RmGers and ex RMGers in fair number. We only have 5 or 6 unionists. The atmosphere at the meeting was not good but it came off and so the circle is underway. It would appear that the RMG is having great difficulties. Several, in introducing themselves mentioned that not only were they ex-LSA rs but also ex RMGers- my impression one of them announced his withdrawal from the RMG right at that meeting to several persons suprise. There is great confusion, it seems, among their post office group. and one of them is involved in adventurous actions in the packinghouse. As you probably know there are strong workerist tendencies amongst the RMG---and now it seems thata really workerist operation, the Spartacus League has taken over one of their Red Circle educational groups and recruited a couple of their number. A couple of them attempted to press the TU circle into taking some concrete actions whereas our concept is that it can only serve as a place where we can bring trade union militants to exchange experiences and discuss problems. Fortunately one of their leading spokesmen Joe Flexer came right in behind Stu S. myself and Bob Sherwood(Lambertist) and quited this action idea down could only serve to blow the whole thing up. I dont know what the LSA has to say about this circle. Bill Martin, who works with Stu and my brother at Douglas called the meeting together. Gary F. phoned him appratnely to remind him that he is a member of the LSA and urged him to go over right after to report what transpired-but I am sure Bill did not bother. I think that the circle has some real possibilities as over the years the movement has maintained contact with friends and ex-members who are unionists--some of whom have moved into lower areas of the machine like Andre Beckerman and a chap I met yesterday in a bookstore who I had not see for years who is now doing research for the Civil servants Association of Ontario. The LSAers who came were dissidents---that is who were invited.

This coming Saturday night a bunch of us will be going over to the opening of the St Catherines LSA headquarters. Charlie and the comrades there insist I make a short congratulatory speech on the opening of the new socialist center. That is how

it is being presented, not as an LSA headquarters, or even a Vanguard forum—but a socialist center. It will be interesting to see how that goes down at 334 Queen W.

When it was obvious that there was nothing really cooking for May Day we approached the League for a united Trotskyist May Day-- ourselves, the RMG and the LSA. We were reminded that the LSA is the official section and told that we were welcome to come down with the r est of the masses to sit and hear their guest speaker Tom Kerry.

I have somehow misplaced one of your letters that I had put aside to answer. Thanks for your words of advice about Nels. Yes, when he phoned me about an interview I had to correct him much to his embarassment about his words to the effect that I had left the "movement." Since then I had a talk with him about where things stood with Trotskyism in Canada, probably supplemented by John Wilson, and then we had a lngthy talk before a tape recorder. I think we have a very firm agreement about what is to be said- not an attack on the LSA, no picture of a tired old Bolshevik looking back on ancient glories--but how I see the radicalization. In fact Nels found the discussion so interesting that he forgot to get any human interest of anykind at all--He is going to start to work up from that taped discussion.

I was very glad to receive the photos of you with Bob and Carol--both of whom I huve a warm feeling for. Did Carol ever try to tell you how women's liberation hit the LSA YS plenum when I was in Europe. This was the first real and utter collpase of this leadership(Riddell-Henderson and company) And Cynthia--your baby looks absolutely splendid. Good to hear you are both coming East next month. As the days get closer-give us a more precise idea of your arrival

(that was preceded by the YS Montreal Convention)

Well it looks like the infamous "popular front" that the NDP brass are alleged to have with the Liberals is about to blow up and the NDP will be launched in electoral battle against their alleged allies. If it happens in the next few days it would appear that Lewis is seeking an issue which gives him a radical stance-inflation, profiteering oil and nationalization. The obvious strong radical reformist stance that Trudeau is going to take will in all probability drive the NDP campign to the left.

Of course if the election is on it will allow the Ontario NDP Brsssto turn the coming convention into a real rah rah affair. Really too bad as we were hoping that we could make some serious progress in pu ling even a very modest left together there. The LSA's position will be a question mark. Kitchwner demanded an NDP fraction meeting --rejected by 334 only to find St Kitts making a simlar demand and Kitchener repeating their demand.

Has Stanfield of underwear fame got his gay liberation bill—bored out your way? If I did not know better I would venture to say that gay liberation has made it with the Tories.

comradely

Ross

(Letter transcribed from typed original which could not be scanned)

May5, 1974

John Glenn
(Toronto)

Dear John:

Thanks very much for the book – rather esoteric – but particularly for the bulletin. And Bob Laxer's contribution. Did you take time to study that contribution. A very serious one – the type of thing I would have anticipated could have unfolded in the LSA. It has added to my knowledge and of course understanding of the Waffle.

I see now why they continually characterize their movement as one for independence and socialism – on the bulletin under the title ADVANCE, and on the trade union statement FOR A FULLY INDEPENDENT AND MILITANT UNION MOVEMENT IN CANADA. They place the struggle for independence over and above all others in the belief that it leads irreversibly to class consciousness and socialism. All other struggles, demands, not to speak of coalitions for such, are diversionary if not downright reformist.

They have set themselves two tasks, not just that of building the Waffle as a socialist working class organization but also a mass nationalist anti-imperialist movement. I do not see any signs of such a movement on the political horizon although I see a mass labor party formation staring us in the face. It is surprising that Laxer does not link the absence of a mass nationalist imperialist movement up to his observation that the Waffle itself has failed over the last several months to take initiatives on the oil crisis. It is one thing to talk about a movement and another to recognize that there is an anti-imperialist, nationalist consciousness that is radical.

Alas he is right on in his criticism of Trotskyism as he appears to know it. While the LSA is not, the Socialist League is for independent Canadian unionism. It is clear to me how <u>we</u> would have voted in the paperworkers' referendum – for a Canadian union, as the overwhelming majority did. It is clear to me that we oppose the Mackenzie pipeline. It is rather harsh but I think with some considerable justice he can call the LSA on these two counts enemies of the Canadian working class.

The Waffle in this document places its entire bankroll on their conviction that there is going to be a broad mass movement – "a non-socialist movement of Canadian nationalists." It also places all its bets on the idea that the NDP can not in any way adjust to the very consciousness that would have to exist to result in this nationalist movement – although the reasons do not seem to be very substantial.

It is rather odd that they do not commit themselves to the concept of an independent Quebec but leave the matter on the plane of right to self- determination. It is

good to see that Laxer rejects the two or three stage theory of development which was the basis of the Chinese strategy and that he sees Canadian nationalism as a manifestation of the law of uneven and combined development.

I see when he talks of Canadian capital he refers to it exclusively as finance capital – the banks. I thought I showed in my documentation that the banks are controlled if not owned by US capital. I see he challenges the CLM *(the Canadian Liberation Movement – Maoist –ed.)* that Canada is not a colony – but he does not substantiate it. Too bad he doesn't do that in order to strengthen his characterization of it as a dependency. But I think the de-industrialization theory (wrong in my opinion) strengthens the concept that Canada is a colony or form of colony – semi- or neo-colony.

Very glad to get this document – we will have to seriously analyze it. I see that (True) North *(the Waffle magazine –ed.)* says that few Waffle groups have gone through their contact lists and are a way behind in their renewal work. Before you head out it would perhaps be good to get an idea of what kind of people they are attracting.

Comradely, Ross

May 6, 1974
40 Homewood Ave, #211
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Irving Abella
York University

Dear Abella

You were right. I am having to file another application--this time to the Explorations Program. After filing the Canada Council one I went to Information Canada for information on Explorations. After a couple of months of promises that the forms would be coming in and they would forward a copy I took the initiative of writing directly. My letter crossed Ms Mireille Badour's letter to me. I am not elegible for Canada Council Humanities grant as it does not provide funds to sustain the principal investigator.

The Explorations Program requires that I name an appraisor who has to file the enclosed form. I know that this is a busy time for you but I would appreciate it if you would handle this as soon as possible. The deadline is Ottawa before the first of June--only a few weeks away.

For your information as the other two appraisors I named Joseph Starobin and Ivan Avakumovic. The information on the back is a sort of condensed version of material that I have sent into the Ottawa office direct.

Thank you for your trouble.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

A contribution to a discussion on the SL publication by Rodd Dowson May 13, 1974

Since we all know that a revolutionary socialist group cannot sustain itself, let alone grow without a publication through which it develops and circulates its views, even before lunaching the SL we talked about this problem.

The general consensus for a whole period was that it would have a magazine format be funadementaly of a theoretical character and be published on a quarterly basis. Some of us have been thinking along this line in the belief that our few forces, in the current confusion in the revolutionary left, had limited possiblities, and clarification of our own ideas had primacy.

However it would now appear that there are more favorable opportunities than we had first thought. An organized struggle still continues on in the LSA, holding the possiblity of split-offs in our direction and the RMG contimues to be under consider-albe difficulties. Besides we have found it necessary and possible to make a few inter-ventions, even if limited in the form of several leaflets, and our whole background, our very essence as Trotskyists is interventionist.

Because of the generally more favorable situation that exists for the SL than we had heretofore thought, and now with the federal elections and the possiblity that they hold even for a tiny Trotskyist group to carry out an effective intervention and establish a base for a publication, it would seem highly desireable now to open up a discussion on the publication which up until now we have talked about postponing to the Fall,

While our publication must have theoretical material in it, it must find ways of presenting the underpinnings of our views, on nationialism, women's liberation, the labor party, etc it must above all present the interventionist character of Trotskyism---the indissluble bond that binds our theory to action, and thereby correctly educate e workers some of whom are getting a completely false concept of Trotskyism from the LSA and RMG with whom we know we are in substantial agreement with on the bas ic principles of Trotskyism. By effectively prsenting our interventionist character our publication will also allow whenever the possiblities permit, our limited forces to intervene in the various aspects of the class struggle in Canada. While in general we will not be selling at factory gates and will not be doing extensive door to door subscription work in working class areas, nonetheless our publication must be of such a c haracter that we CAN do this when opportunities present themselves.

This involves not just content, it also involves the form of the publication, that is the format of the publication. This is a matter of great concern. The format must be of such a character that we can be interventionist, even though at this stage we ar e largely comentators.. The format must be of such a character as to limit us to the rol e of comentators but must allow us to intervene--to be agigators when the possibility presents itself.

The format of an interventionist publication in our culture and time is not a magazine ,but a tabloid newspaper.

There are a number of magazines published by forces on the left. On the one extreme there is the English theoretical journal , The New Left Review, which carries some very valuebale material but is very academic. There are more popular theoretical magaizes like Monthly Review , the InternationaliSocialist Review, Canadian Dimension, the Waffle's North Country, the CP's Marxist Review and then there is Last Post, which is of an extened journalistic analysis and expose character.

While (continued transcription from handwritten document)

(continued document, pp.2-3-4, in R.D.'s handwriting)

''A contribution to a discussion on the SL publication, by Ross Dowson, May 13, 1974

(…) While format must not be of such a character as to limit us to the role of commentators but allow us to intervene – to be agitators when the possibility presents itself. The format of an interventionist publication in our culture and times is not a magazine but a tabloid newspaper. There are a number of magazines published by forces on the left. On the one extreme there is the English theoretical journal New Left Review which *(illegible…)* but is very attractive. There (are the) more popular theoretical magazines like Monthly Review and the International Socialist Review *(US-SWP—ed.)*, Canadian Dimension (Canada), the Waffle`s North Country, and those that are extended journalistic analysis and exposés, such as Last Post.

While they have a much different content none of them are interventionist. Some of them are promoted almost entirely by select book stand sales and the recommendation of circles of intellectuals who read and write for them. In the case of the ISR it is promoted as supplementary to the really concentrated campaign of the SWP and its supporters to promote the Militant . The Waffle`s North Country has only commenced publication without an apparent promotional operation after a couple of years of hit or miss circulation of a house organ (nature) and many internal bulletins. (With) this election as they settle their organizational question will probably see them more seriously come to grips with this problem.

The circulation of these magazines is relatively modest certainly in comparison to the many tabloids. This is not because the (organizations and) tendencies that publish them do not know how to make them attractive or how to promote them. It is just that the market is smaller, the audience is more limited. A relatively small layer largely of intellectuals is interested in theory. The magazine format that is used accepts that as a fact and adapts to it. The magazine format is more expensive. The format of an interventionist publication in our culture and times is not a magazine. Either theoretical on the one extreme (like) NLR *(British New Left Review)* or popular theoretical (like) International Socialist Review -US *(repeats end of first paragraph –ed.)*

It is a tabloid newspaper style publication. Magazine style publication is by its format essentially commentarist. The newspaper is by its format interventionist, regardless of content. Not even union militants and socialist activists let alone the working class who read – read magazines.

This is not only confirmed by all analyses that we have seen of the reading public but it is the experience of the revolutionary socialist movement. Every revolutionary socialist current publishes in newspaper format first before supplementing it with a magazine. The Revolutionary Communist Front (ex-Ligue Communiste) newspaper style publication Rouge has many many times the circulation of the magazine Quatrième Internationale. So too The Militant has many many times the circulation of the ISR.

This format is used as the primary form of publication by all revolutionary currents regardless of their size because of this very fact – that it is interventionist. It so happens that while a tabloid newspaper the format is (while) interventionist it can also be adapted to meet the need of extended commentary. The publication of the Canadian Trotskyist movement from its very beginning has had the format of a newspaper although its forces have always been severely limited and its opportunities for intervention severely restricted – this was true even when it was a tiny opposition current in the relatively isolated Communist Party of Canada in the 30s.

Since most of our experience has been with Labor Challenge and particularly within the last 2 or 3 years of its existence which saw a steady decline in its quality, there may be a tendency to see LC as we were most familiar with it and particularly its weaknesses, as expressing the problems that would confront us if we were to publish in a tabloid newspaper format.

In our opinion most criticisms we have head in this respect have to do **not** with the format, but with the weakness of LC`s editors and writers in meeting the diverse handling that a newspaper format permits. A newspaper format can be very readily adapted to the publication of lengthy theoretical articles, with lengthy commentaries, with lengthy news analyses and news itself pure and simple. It`s only a matter of mix and layout. LC even in is recent period has met these challenges effectively and did it on a consistent basis years ago before the radicalization of the 60s and 70s when it had no audience except its few immediate contacts and door to door sales. It`s a simple fact that most pamphlet material – theoretical material – Canadian Trotskyism was published first appeared in our tabloid newspaper – ‘’Canada-US Relations,’’ ‘’ Power & Dilemma of the Trade Unions,’’ ‘’Vive le Québec Libre,’’ ‘’ For an Independent and Socialist Quebec.’’

A newspaper format would not in any substantial way prevent the SL from publishing the theoretical material that it wants to circulate in the radicalization – on the contrary it expedites it. In our opinion the radicalization is extremely polarized. The various formations are still quite limited in their scope. They tend to live within themselves. They are highly protective of themselves from the influence of other currents in the radicalization. They are not under any substantial popular pressure. There is tremendous resistance and reluctance to buy material that centers in on the development of the views of an opponent within the radicalization. And in this respect (the) price of a publication is far from irrelevant.

(Debate over YS & Engler – same old one.)

The number of radicals that will read material of a theoretical character – material abstracted from the direct situation – that is lengthy – is very few. How many SWPers read The Militant. How many also read the ISR. The answer is obvious. How many LSA/LSOers read the major documents of the last discussion in the LSA – in particular the main documents of the UT by Ross Dowson. My own experiences in this respect has

even shocked me. It was not that they were not readily available and that there was no pressure on the comrades to read them. It would almost seem that only those who already thought themselves to be opponents of them read them and for what they could find to confirm their prejudices. Many were overwhelmed with the material – which is the situation today in Canada within the radicalization. At the last meeting of the SL there were salespersons for the RMG, the LSA, for the Spartacist League – the CPC, Canadian Liberation, Waffle and of course the CP and others who are extremely active in the radicalization (who) didn`t appear.

(end)

#311 —40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2

May 17, 1974

(Mpls?)

Dear Harry and Pat—I take it that Kelly E S ? unable to read as yet although he can sign his name--- and Jeff (S)?

Darrel brought your note over to me oneof our negotations nights over the operatio n of Camp Poundmaker. I sent you my address upon receiving your Christmas card as I am no longer connected with the 334 Queen Street West operation....however I guess you did not notcie it. I am located in the very center of the city--the whole beautiful panorama spread out before me--better that from the Empire State Building, or the Eiffel Tower or coming in on Air Canada--not seeing the metropolis from outside but in the belly of the operation. Lois loaned me the money to buy into this condominium. Jim Mitchell lives one floor down Daivid Middleton a couple of floors up and Armando Duarte on the 11th floor. I am typing this note in our new office the office of The Socialist League. I have been working down here tonight getting our clipping file in order so that we can go to press with our publication which we are luanching in the form of a tabloid tied into the election. I am taking a pile of the material out to the camp tomorrow just in case it rains and I will be able to get come of the comrades working on it. Gus and Julie T and Jim went out today, John Darling and several others are going out tommorrow High D and Stu Sinclir along with Bill Martin and possible Fred Callaghan will be out. They want to talk about the CLC convention. At the first public forum of the Socialist League where I spoke on the question of the Struggle for Canadian Trade union autonomy and Cdn national unionism I blew Stu and Hugh's minds. Among other things I expressed the opinion that this was the biggest single issue in the ranks of organized labor and given even a minimum leadership by CUPE it could lead to a development like the CIO in the Thirties---it could lead to a transofrmation of the Canadian labor movement. Well This matter certainly proved t o be the overriding issue in Vancouver without any leadership from CUPE.

I was good to get your corular --despite its very sober and proper tone. Of course Newfoundland is getting a big play in the media up this way--the bill borards in Toronto are now trying to convince us to spend our vacation there--and as you are the only threads that I have with that area I often think of you. Sometime I should make an effort to tell you about Newfoundland. Even the most casual TV watching turns up many many program s and no doubt by a simple osmotic process I am becoming an expert on the area. They probably dont show these programsin Newfoundland and besides you probably havent the time to look at them

I dont want to disrupt your operation down there but womens liberation doesn't come through very strong in the line from the Stone's. Lots about the dog and Kelly but Harry and Pat column soon slips into Harry is bisy busy...with Pat taking a beautiful swan dive. There is a "they" about the print shop. I hope you are picking up the skill Pat. Are you printing the St John magazine in the instant shop or just laying out designing and editing the magazine and farming out the printing. The shop seems like a very good idea--an area for creative relaxation for Jeff from Avalon. You should be able to get the NDP work. I take it they will be running a slate in this election.

I hope you keep your fingers in things by joining and moving around the NDP. No doubt it attracts the best elements in the area. Better than going to church---from the cartoon on the front page that experience isn't doing much for you

Mitch Riddell

Besides what are you to do with all that knowledge that you are picking up from the History of the RR if you dont move around the NDP. The next two months will open things up in that area. When we get the tabloid off I am planning to take a month off doing sub work on all the NDP signs--we will get a base under our publication besides getting a feel of where things are. I took a job in A & A Books and then in the Victoria Hotel and just qualified for unemployment insurance. I have applied for a grant from the Canad q Canada Council to write a history of Canadian Trotskyism--but I wont know where that stands until September. I went around to talk to the key profs who have much to say to the council as to the usefulness of the project and my qualifications and they are all for it--two of them urging me to ask for 25,000--a three year affair.

What does Gordon have to say about things in Halifax. It is possible that the Revolu tionary Marxist Group has something there still. This group with Mitch P top dog in Winn ipeg is the creation of the International leadership of the FI and the adaptationism of the Young Riddell LSA. They are as big as the LSA now. I hear that they are running four candidates in the coming elections. This will no doubt see the LSA running at least one, possibly two -Jacquie in Vancouver ???? Ultra leftism has hit the ~~[illegible]~~ all the forces that came out of the radicalization--The Waffle is running three or four candidates --imagine-they called upon the CLC in a leaflet distributed to the delegates that it should disaffiliate from the NDP, Of course the LSA and the RMG are going through agonizing exper- iences. Some of the comrades of the SL think that we will be able to regroup them but I myself think that most of these forces are going to be dissipated. Well we will see

Do I take it that Harry Stone is heading up this way shortly to get a pair of shoes. What did Jeff do with the boat--did he sail it down and is he thinking of selling it up for a holiday.

Must break this off--when you have a chance let me hear from you

warmest regards

Ross Dowson

May 21, 1974
c40 Homewood Ave # 2311
Toronto

London

Dear Steve

A bunch of us were out to the camp this weekend--no LSAers there other than that notor ous dissident Bill Martin. Dont know what that means. The settlement of the Camp Poundmaker cororpations is moving now in very slow gear. At the last meeting I think it finally came through to Darrell who represents the LSA where it is all going. I insiststend that a clause protecting the corporation against lot owners who do not pay their share of the taxes be put back in and having done that raised the whole matter of the responsibility of the LSA to sustain the lodge to its use by the lot owners. The lcause I suggested be inserted was to the effect that if the lodge is not sustained that the LSA is required to sell its land---they agreed to that--but when it came to the lodge I said that the lodge had to be maintained if not by the LSA then by the rest of the corporation in the interests of the lot owners and I could not see how the corporation could be expect to buy out the lodge as it was a community service---not at all to challenge the present concept of possession boy the LSA of the loedge. I think that while all that is very very reasonable that it came as a suprise to Darrell. ..tmmh I thought that my suggestion of our preparedness to by out the land met some of their thinking but that we owed nothing for the lodge cut across their possible thinking. At any rate the slowdown of the proecess is not at all bad. I was thinking a little earl that it would be very good if they would have to live with us a while --while the whole thing is still in my name.

The weather was beautiful. The triliums have just come out and made a carpet of white, pink and some red across etire areas. . The bluem mixm violets are out, the blue ones and so too the dog toothed ones, also saw some dutchmens breeches I think they are called. The trees are slower dow n there than in Toronto The hardwoods are still in bud--a certain haze. The rives is very high--possibly 4 feet above normal. The buttermilk falls in one big cataract. We cleaned up Gus' and Julie's lot--which looks very good. It turned out we did not get a key part when in Napanee and so we couldn't finish the pump in working condition. I was looking forward to some rain so I could finish the fireplace but it didn't rain --however it is completely functional.

I am getting my accounts in good shape--because I see I will be spending some money that I hold in trust before we make the change over. So I wonder if you would give me an accurate account of where your lot stands with regards to payment --how much they have at 334 and how much I have of yours--and if possible make arrangements to keep this accunt up to date. I dont know whether you intend to put up any structure this year--if you do I would not mind knowing about this so I could arrange to help you and also arrange the premit if it is such a structure as requires a permit.

Tonite we will be making all the decisions on our tabloid--it will take us about two weeks to put it out--after that I will probably be heading into the London area to pick up subs from NDP signed houses.

comradely

Ross

May 22, 1974
40 Homewood Ave # 2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Dear Avakumovic

My phone number is 961 4554. Phone me any time until you get me. I am seldom home until 11 and seldom retire until 1:30 in the morning. You will disturb no one--other than myself . I live in the very centre of the city-- Homewood runs parallel to Jarvis Street next from Carlton st. I am a few hundred yards from the central CBC broadcasting studios.

I am certainly looking forward to seeing you . I saw the Tribune on this occassion is correct--about my negotiations with Henri Gagnon. I have been out of touch with him for years but I should be able to obtain his address for you should you be heading to Montreal

sincerely

Ross Dowson

June 24, 1974
40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto

LSA

Dear Darrell;

I was up at the camp over this last weekend.

In general all is well---we found the camp gate open and it would appear that one of our neighbours is letting his cows in. So far the cows have not eaten the tender tops of the trees that some of us have so labored over to get growing. But they also appear to be getting in through weak spots in the fence. Lois and I spent a couple of hours on Sunday very crudely pulling the fence together on the west side of the lot. Later on when we can arrange it it seems to me that we will have to set up a team to rebuild the fence on that side. We would be able to do that with some stout wire and labor power as the rails are in generally good shape.

I was suprised to find that no one appears to have gone up from the League to get the lodge and grounds in any kind of functional condition. As you know it is not possible to arrange to hold anything up there without some preparatory work on that area. In fact there is a minimal amount of work to be done on that area every year or the whole thing will fall into decay.

The grass had not been cut on the baseball diamond or the parking lot, to say nothing of the trees that we have been nutrung on the various lots. If this grass is not cut we will soon be overrun with weeds. Already one crop of dandelions haas come up and seeded. The grass in some parts was over three feet high. I almost a day cutting down the grass on the baseball diamond itself (not the in and out field) the parking lot and table tennis area. I just didn't have the time or energy to clear out the grass in the camping area--where some of the huts are, but that has to be done along with the walk way down to the fireplace at the river or the areas cannot be used. If you walk through the grass in the morning you get soaked to the skin in no time and if you walk through the grass in the evening you get bitten alive by the mosquitos

Of course some time has to be spent getting the lodge into shape. I found a window broken, probably be a storm. It could not be left like that and Lois took it in to be glazed. I was hoping to finish the fireplace however after cleaning the place up I did not have time to do any of that. The parts for the pump are up there at the lodge and we will have to get Bill Martin to do us the favor of getting it into order.

Who has the League appointed as the person in charge of the camp area. Would you give me their name and telephone number so that I can find out when you plan to make special use of the lodge and so I can talk to him?/her about our coping with the problem of minimum mainteance of the common facilities. I am sure that you agree that a certain minimum maintenance is necessary to maintain the facilities at thelevel to which we got them, not to speak of raising them

Lois advanced the funds for and brought in five gallons of oil-gas mix for the grass cutter and 5 gals of coal oil--so that's ok- The grass cutter needs sharpening

Has Allen been able to do anything with the agreement ?

comradely but its good for another go.

Ross Dowson

D3 #89

June 25, 1974
Toronto

Oswekin (Glenn)
Dear John G

Thanks for your note of June 17.

e havent got too much reaction from the paper. Persons I ask seem hesitant to comment yet. Maurice F thought it was very good but reacted somewhat the same way as Paul to the front page edit, I gather from Wayne. In a short phone talk with me he was more vague--pleased with the page 2 article on re forms. Maurice phoned just before we left to return to Vancouver. I gather his and Cynthia's stay here geared them to play a more consistant xxx role in Vancouver. He told me that he was joining your tendency, which I think is a step forward for him. Nat Moerdice took 200 copies of forward with here on a tour she is making of Canada. I gather that they think it is useful from their point of view of differentiating themselves from us. But I am all for it because no matter what she may say or do the paper speaks for itself. I understand that Dan Lapscott ordered a bundle. Marilyn thought the paper right on.

Things should be a little better for the tendency for I understand from Vic Hugh that they are fusing the two Toronto branches into one. Carol Berry who has joined us told Gord that she had not joined the tendency when in the LSA because it had a very low profile in Toronto and there was no one in the tendency in her branch.

The Chile meeting here last week was a disaster. Only about 100 attended and aside from all the ultra left currents there were only 2 Oto 3 Chileans. There was the ridiculous situation outside the Unitarian Church where on had to run a veritable gauntlet of salespersons and distributors of the LSA, the ~~Spartacus~~ Latin American justice bulletin, Forward, The Mole, the Workers Vanguard, a special leaflet by the Spartacus etc etc. One very interesting item was being sold by the RMG. Under the United secretariat of the FI there is now being published a weekly journal called IMPRECCOR. With the same major contributors --Maitain and Mandel as Intercontinental Press it is appearing in English and being airmailed into North America. It would seem to me to bring the whole thing much closer to a split. Intercontinental has not commented on this yet.

Yes you are quite right in your comment that "comrades in the LSA approach everything on an issue to issue basis in regards ti the NDP and they dont view things in an overall fashion." What the paper says with regards to the NDP is not even a pale reflection of what is current in the LSA. For instance Harry P was telling me that he had a discussion with George Bryant in the course of which George said that the NDP has been bypassed by the radicalization in Canada--that it was going down the drain and no longer represented whatwe had previously based our orientation on. The lesser experienced comrades in the LSA have became totally confused by the so-called leadership, above all by its failure to come out openly and frankly --it still goes through the hypocritical farce of pretending that it has not changed the line of the movement but is only refining it, sharpening it up. They will have to take on our paper and this will do much to clarify everyones mind.

Of course a key factor for some like Vern is their hope upon hope that somewhow the leadership will be able to rise to the challenge and make it. For some the RMG is already making it, and possibly the SL is making it. But for others it looks like the collapse will have to be absolute or total. I think that our paper is the be contribution to the process. I am glad you like it. I dont

-30-

(A document, typed but sometimes illegible, signed by Ross Dowson, Toronto, was marked "to be translated by Armando into Portuguese for submission to Republica – Lisbon.'' Undated, found in June 1974.)

In recent issues of Republica you have been running a series of articles through which you attempt to define the various political formations that have sprung up in Portugal since the great April 25 events.

This would be a difficult feat even under the best circumstances and with the greatest good will, particularly considering the few lines devoted to describe each current.

In the case of the L— through your definition you have unfortunately more than created a misimpression; you have created a grave political error.

The L— as the Portuguese section of the Fourth International can by no stretch of the imagination be defined as anarchist, or any form of anarchism – syndicalist, spontaneist, or what you will.

The L— as a section of the Fourth International subscribes to the program of the Fourth International and in particular the document adopted by its founding 1938 congress called "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International." This program denounces anarchism as a trap that can only lead to the disarming of the masses, specifically as it has found its most consummate expression on the Iberian peninsula.

Permit me to attempt a two or three-line definition. The L— consider themselves to be the living exponents of Marxism-Leninism in our epoch. They seek to establish working class power through organs of proletarian democracy, that is soviets, on a national and international scale. They are called Trotskyists from the name of the famed Leon Trotsky, organizer of the 1917 Petrograd insurrection, founder of the Red Army and co-inspirer with Lenin of the Third Communist International, and irreconcilable opponent of Stalin as leader of the bureaucratic caste that has politically expropriated the Soviet workers and transformed the Communist Parties from instruments of socialist revolution into their diplomatic pawns.

Sincerely,
Ross Dowson, Toronto

Ross Dowson
40 Homewood Ave, #2311
Toronto, M4Y 2K2

961-4554
595E-1284

(found in 1974 June)

Professor Norman Penner
Glendon Campus
York University

Dear Norman,

Yesterday a friend told me that he thinks applicatio ns for grants have to be in by December 1st. No doubt you now have authoritative information on all this.

However in light of the possible accuracy of this opinion I have taken the liberty of enclosing xerox copies of some pages from my application for a grant in January 30, 1974. Should you have decided to pursue the project we talked of over the phone on Monday possibly you will find this material of some use. I notice that besides Avakumovic and Starobin, Proefessor Abella sponsored my projection.

I am also enclosing a copy of Forward of last May containing an article relating to our conversation on the PQ. I gather you are not getting this paper.

I am looking forward to hearing from you with regards to the project. If I can help in anyway to further it be sure to let me know.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

Toronto
July 3, 1974

London

Dear Steve; (-?)

Got your note and cheque a few days ago. Good to hear from you----but dis appointing that you said not a single word about Forward. Well today the votes are cas and you will be able to say a few words about Forward the NDP and the level of conscio ness of the class within that framework. This election is somewhat more interesting in that the CP and CPC-ML fielded sufficient candidates to get their name on the ballo and gab national prime TV time. Quebec will be particularly interesting.also---last polls put the NDP ahead of the Tories.

Despite our few forces we manged to insert the paper into the NDP--Tonite we did will be circulating it at the four larger "victory" NDP rallies. A fid substantial door to door work on NDP signs in several areas to fairly good effect. I probably hit 200 or more homes with NDP signs in both Broadview and Fenches and never met one person who so much as mentioned the CP, the CPC-ML or in Leaches the RMG---and I neve saw a scrap of literature or a poster. ~~xxx~~ Some RMG posters outside my apartment near Jarvis and I hear that Kate Alderdice of Eglinton sites are in downtown Vancouve tho.

Glad to get your dough on the camp. Havent had the big meeting on the agreement. Last revisions were extensive and Alan G has been tied up with other things. I haven't pushed things as I figure it is worthwhile having a little living experience with the LSA. Last weekend a whole bunch of friends of the Socialist League, Vic Hugh etc came up and took over the camp area to meet four LSAers who came out to make a survey The LSA had not been out at all until then and I wrote them a note as to how it was necessary to do a minimum maintance-such as cut the grass so the playing field could be used. I got a work team going which the LSAers didnot participate in. They only stayed the day for a good baseball game but the rest of us did many things to improve the situation. I gather the LSA is going to arrange something over the august weekend. Did two more layers on the fireplace, put collpasing legs on the tables so the hall can be cleared for dancing shits etc.

Interested in hearing you develop your description of the younger workers at the London P.C. "Long hair, hip dress is common, They are with the union, against management, the govt,etc. The amount of race prejudice and Canadian chauvinism is ap alling however." I am particularly interested in any descr ption and analysis of Canadian chauvinsim--I see you separate it out from race prejudice

I see you talked of three days off this weekend--meaning now last weekend I tak Of course ~~xxx~~ if you went up you probably found no one there. Lois B and Ruth D had an extravaganza to which I along with Vic and Maria were invited. Then this was the final weekend of the election. H hope that you meant next week end--this coming I expect to be up there July 12 weekend. Hope to see you there.

comradely

Ross Dowson

July 5, 1974

Joan Newbigging
Toronto

Dear Joan

In a letter in response to some enquiries, Darrell informed me that you are in charge of the Camp area at Poundmaker

Last weekend a considerable number of persons came up to the camp, including four comrades who came to look the facilities over from the League,(LSA) freidns and family of Vic Hugh, Lois B ,myself, and some members and friends of the Socialist League.

The LSAers left after participating in an excellent ball game, on Saturday night if I am not mistaken. Over the next couple of days groups of people pitched in to do several things around the camp area.

we added a couple of layers of rock to the fire place which is getting to look better than ever--and prepared some wood for it. we almost finished the inside white painting of the ceiling in the fireplace half of the lodge, we took the bulk of the cedar fence rails down to the flats (people are continually using them for fire wood) and managed to erect six or seven sections of the western bourdary fence, we managed to give a rough cutting to the rest of the playing field so it can now be used. Nearly all the new trees have been cleared of grass around them

When I left, the kitchen was in good order--all dishes done and the power cut off. I collected as before $1 a night from everyone who sayed over on the camp facilities. I dont have my accounts at hand but I think that I have collected about $25 so far, which I will make an accounting of

Lois Bedard is now up at the camp. She will be at the lodge to recieve any phone call on Friday nite from 6 to 6;45. She will be returning to Toronto on Saturday and probably returning on Monday. You might phone her. Vic and Marie intend to be going up more frequently but I am not sure of their schedule. You might phone them--they will be in oronto over the weekend.

comradely

Ross Dowson

July 7, 1974

Dear Darrell;

I have no idea what the supplementary tax bill for Poudmaker is for. Do I understand from your note that you have paid ~~xx~~ it ?--You write ; "and we did not pay it until recently." I would gather that that was so recent ~~xxx~~ it ~~xxxxxx~~ was not through their books when they prepared the 1974 bill which I received around June 25th . Since you have paid it I am not inclined to wrtie a special letter of enquiry at this time. Perhaps we should enclose an enquiry when we come to pay this years first instalment due on July 31---- 396.87.

I am afraid that there is some mail at 334 or 27 Bulwer that should have been forwarded to me. A fellow in Ottawa phoned me the other day to ask why I had not anstered his enquiries as to Maurice Spector. He is writing a study of Spector . I told him I had not received a letter from him and then he told me that he had sent it to 334. When down to see Crescent a couple of weeks ago about some books that Ron phoned me about I asked about any mail for me but no one was in the CO. I never put a change of address in the post office an much of the mail addressed to me was in reality for the LSA. However I figure that you have had more than enough time to change any mail for me that is obvious for the League and yet you are not sending mail that is addressed to me on to me. I thereupon went to the Spadina post office to put a change of address in for Ross Dowson 334 Queen to 40 Homewood. I have since received three important peices of mail that properly belong to me--along with two copies of the Korean newspaper. I have not bothered to forward the Korean paper to you but will do so if you ask me to. One of the three peices of correspondence that came was the tax bill which I have brought to your attention.

comradely

Ross Dowson

July 29, 1974

Ross Dowson, Apt 2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Archie Callaghan
Indian Meal Line
Torbay NFLD

Dear Archie;

Fred dropped in to remind me of your address and to suggest that we send you some copies of Forward. Of course the paper is somewhat dated directed as it is towards the elections --now a thing of the past as far as most workers are concerned. However he figured that you might like to pass them around to persons you know better politically

The paper has got a very good response and we are now getting everything into gear to put it out on a regualr basis. I would like to know your opinion of it and any suggestions you might have

Did the NDP sink any roots in your area during the elections? ...and are you a member of it ? The top brass got rid of the Waffle but last weekend the re was a delegated women's conference that took them on for their soft peddling women's rights and in particular for not coming out firmly in defence of Doctor Morgenthaler. There was big pressure to run a woman for leadership of t he party. It may well be that the women's rights issue will be the one that will sell things for the left at next months Ontario NDP convention

We are hearing loys more about Newfoundland in the boss press and CBC --but it hasn't got much further than the scenic beauties and oddities they think will appeal to tourists--nothing much on the class struggle no matter what its level is. Oh yes,the Portuguese fishermen there and their great exepctations of the upsurge in their country got a couple of major articles--but even here is soon dropped out of sight.

The other day I was talking to a Portuguese comrade about the fishermen and he recalled with considerable satisfaction that little propaganda action we pulled off with your considerable help---- you will remember the revolutionary appeal that we got from Portugal and which we made up as a leaflet that you distributed among the fisherman. This comrade who is generally somewhat pessimistic told me that he was quite sure that it had some effect. Of course I am for doing those things anyway because you never know. Big opportunities are opening up now in Portugal--there is a developing revolutionaby left and the CP-SP in the government coalition are being exposed in such incidents as their breaking of the postal workers strike as no amount of theoretical exposes will do it. And now Spain government circles are in tur moil and we have just had the big class polarization around Mitterand in France. Did you have an opp orunity to meet any of the Portugueses fishermen and where does that situation stand now ? I would be interested in any info you have, newspaper clippings and info an any of your experiences.

I would like to hear from you first opportunity you have

fraternally
Ross Dowson

July 29, 1974
40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto

I Avakumovic
Department of History
UBC

My Dear Avakumovic

I only a few moments ago was shown your note with regards to FOHWARD.

I have been wondering what happened to you. Were you unable to make the trip East here ? Or did you prove unable to contact me ? I was really looking forward to meeting you.

Several students have been contacting me about their projects. Perhaps the most interesting a Gary O'Brien from Carleton who Nrman Penner has been stimulating. He is working on a study of Maurice Spector. He tells me that the Department of Labor in Ottawa has an extensive collection of the early CP theoretical journal and he fed me bits of inofmration that he has gleaned from the Ontario Govt Archives here in Toronto which apparently contain materials that the RCMP seized from CPers during the Section 98 Sargent Leopold trials.

A footnote on Forward ~~mmm~~the adaptation to ultra leftism by Labor Challenge and the ultra leftism of the RMG and the Old Mole. ... we are still paying the price of the Stalinist destruction of the revolutionary cadre that was a response to the October Revolution and the radicalization that came with the Great Depression.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

Partial transcript of Dowson tape (3 hr. tape summer 1974) ← Arnie Moritz 2 for his pamphlet

(N.B. not much of this can be taken for good coin, and it is basically the same as his 1970 document) ← (2-ed)

R.D. I came from Toronto, never in CP, all the persons I joined the movement with had been..or gone into the CP, like my brother, I came in in 1935 or so...they beat him(Spector) (note - Arnie - I don't have double brackets so theings I add in are in single brackets - ( )) Intercepted his mail, exposed him before he was able to develop his connections, Spector was cut right off... Mac didn't know what was happening..in a matter of shor period he became uneasy...and in a matter of year and ½ joined Spector... isolated...WP formed in '31 mostly students radicals ...unempl. work, one of the few areas where did effective wor,...height of the CP was Stalin friendship pacts, Buck claims 20,000, effective movement...

(WPC) very small, isolated, aside from unempl. mov't - unstable mov't becoming demoralized when I came in, CCF entry , in my opinion unchallengeable this was an error, tactical error of maj. proportions, on the very eve of the was the Trotskyist mov't was a skeleton...3 way division in T. party...Spector, my impression he didn't have the qualities of patient methodical wor,. I suppose he thought he could do better in the states...'36, 3 way d division in, formal jamajority favoured entry, activist nucleus majority opposed, split not overcome till 1938, resolution in d document book (Formative Years), Chicago, reunited...Field group in Canada he made connections with some radicals around Spector and formed the LRWP -NY Public Library - Workers Voice (1934-39) ultra =revolutionaries, sectarians, super activity, devel. principled diffs, personal conflicts, devel. opp. to entryism, Deutscher's pos. on FI, London Bureau, when the war broke this movement fell apart, bigger here, William Krehm, wrote a valuable book on Spain, LRWP and WP wa r between us, when we reorg. the movement picked up on of them, ED Aldes (still alive), then the split in the WP, which was only overcome with the oncoming of the war, no collaboration, not open and public split...

Socialist Action, we were illegal..underground , uniquely different situation. first person imprisoned under the WMA was a T., Frank Watson, he haw imprisoned, and he went to plea his case, he didn't even have a copy of the act, not been published, went to jail for 3 mos. very vicious situation, police were promoting persons to phone in, reporting anybody who said anything of a d disloyal character and everyday in the press you'd read about some guy who'd get picked up because he said to hell with the queen, so the movement was under tremendous pressure, duress and subsequently the Stalinists were released became the most fervent warmongers. terrrible warmongers, and we were the only opponents of the war, a handfull of revs, you, illegal, well in '41 I hitchhiked across Can. and made connections again with the cdes in Vancouver, ... Van. -10, Tor -20 , during the war, pulled it all together in '44, by the time of V-J day we had publ. 3 issues... (during war) stopped mail,.. nationalists in Quebec. was opp. to war...nats were isolationists...Stalinists carried very vicious campaign not only for conscription but no strike pledge , CLC rejected it, unlike Am. mov't, because of CCF and t.u. leaders already organized into a class party of their own of a type.

... Dowson

....led a co uple of ~~&&~~ big ~~&&&&&&~~ struggles (in the army) ...we started publication while I was still in the army, we reported the strike but we didn't make it a big, very abstract or I would have gone to jail, ~~&&~~ big opposition to war in Canada, passivist, nationalist, in essence, they had 2 armis, had an army of persons they could not ship overseas - zombies - the living dead, then they had the troops who were volunteers so called, before I got called up I volunteered cause I couldn't get a job in war industry cause I had no rejection slip, I had the impression I was rejectable, according to my family doctor flat feet, but I was in perfect health - so I turned out to be a volunteer - so I decided to become a trained killer, learn everything I could became a corporal then an officer, then as soon as I got all the training I resigned, they wouldn't let me , tried to promote me, I was in from 41-44, then they let me resign and immediately called my up again but I said I wanted to take my traiing again in training camps with fellows who I had trained NCO's officers etc. bit of a scandal, when VE day came in army, still training, big pressure for al to get out we organized (some fellows, of VJ day - I was in infantry at Niagara-on-~~&~~the-Lake and they decided they couldn't let us out cause we had low service, and we were not volunteers to go to Japan, that was an American war, so they decided to make us cheap labor where workers wouldn't take, packing house in the railway, so I organised a campaign against~~&~~ scabbing, $1.30/day, workers getting 60¢/hr. or so, VJ day I went to Toronto, first group I pulled a stoppage but fellows broke up after the first stoppage, pressure, I couldn't hold them, then when I came into Toronto and Coldwell was there and Coldwell was speaking in High Park, CCF picnic, so I went up to speak to him and told him what was happening, he showed considerable interest, quite shicked that troops would be used for this purpose and he told me he'd take it up in the House of Commons when he got back to Ottawa he wrote me a not to this effect when he got back, so the next day I went back and pulled the pin again and it was broken up again and the next day I released Coldwell's letter to the press they reported the stoppages, so the next day we pulled it off again and ~~&&&&~~ they picked me up, put me on charge all the troops came off the job behind me, when that news got out simultaneous actions in many other places they threatened me with mutiny, they eventually sent me back to Niagara-on-the-lake and offered me a good job, keep us happy, but eventuall discharge, after they got the conscription bote they decided to send the zombies over to Europe, strikes, drove the officers off the camp, troops seized a couple of the major camps in Terrace -that's near Prince Rupers, held the camp for aperiod, and when they sent the troops up to Amchitka, Amchitka? Amchitka? yes! couple of other islands S. of Alaska where Japanes alleged troops rioted and wouldn't go on the boats, these were zombies too, my young brother involved after VE day in Aldershot~~&~~ big struggles.
...I came in on weekends
...the paper had a big circulation and our paper identified with the CCF, CCF vote in the troops a fantastic majority, circulation 3000 or so, check it, we had persons in the ccf, were in an entry, CCF most logical, during the war, incidientally a cde of our got elected to the House of Commons this should be dealt with carefully, think it out,...don't like to compromise people, for instance some of the Fieldites big people, in the bourgeois society, head Macleans, Earle Birney, most prominent political economist in N. Am. was exec. secr. of Canadian Trotskyist mov't, Da id Easton at Univ. of Chi, quite a few important people around our mov't,
..(CCF guy) Archibald, don't take this down, interesting guy, we were in th CCF, Paddy Stanton recruited him , well he got the nomination and got elect in Prince Ruper, full good intentions, we grought George Clarke because here is an opportunity for world T. P~~2~~ Paddy Stanto recruited Angus McFie head of Pulp and Sulphite W. Union
... he was red-baited t in the House of C., dropped away...he did subse-

sequently in his own way, try to play a revolutionary role, red-baited in the house of Commons, called a Trotskyist . 46,47, check election date, when we decided to break our CCF, see we had been in since 37, during the war when there was no alternative and the post war period, radical upsurges over 2 yrs not a warker in Canada not on picket line, see Canadian CIO not &built like Am. CIO, not before war, during the war during class collab., by class collaboration so when war ended bourgeois moved in to cross the, Stelco more scabs than strikers, several major strikes,
...made and entry in 49 no 51? 51 yes re-entered CCF Labour Party in 1948 elections convinced us no longer populist, probably before, endorsed by CLC back in 45 but in our opinion didn't have proletarian base till that time...I played a role in High Park CCF, never accepted as member, I was on executive...we carried our transitional demands in the CCF, basicallyy, plbliched little papers...I had on in High& Park, Pat Shulz &&& did too ...Toronto 35, Vancouber - liquidationist , poor relations, Lilian Whitney ran recently in elections in Vanc. - remained in CCF wouldn't come out, Vancouver operation had adapted subsequently had a split Whitney, wife and a few others would not carry on indpendent work, Pabloited
Q. - significance of '53 split
A.- my brother and J-M Bedard, regional director of CIO in Que....there was a split some of the top leaders went to Pablo...it's all docmented-called Iceland - Canada-&&&& cause we were in M. Dowson, Bedard, Joe Rosenthal, left... they died at abirth, = Canadian section remained as part of IC - formed a political org. for a few weeks, - issued a call - Canadian section - Pablo expelled me so I told him to go to hell - at first I didn't support the SWP - we didn't know hwat was going on-read about Cannon's open letter in Militant - astonished me-didn't take position - some cdes in BC who had ongoing relations with cdes in Seattle were red-hot Cannonites so I was in middle - Whitney-Hould-'53 - then eventually I went over to Cannon's postions...they had no perspectives -I think they published one doc ument that"sabout all -Pabloism not an& issue in Canada-never went anywhere
Q ...Cochrane, Clarke
A. yes - I'm wrong...
George Clarke who had come up to Canada to help us with this MP...even in the sections where there was a practice of liquidationsim entry sui generis which was liquidationism in Eur. they talked abo&t a paper but never had one for instance in Mandel, when I went over in '63 - cdes in Belgium section...were liquidation in the SP but they talked as if they had an independent operation, they talked about a public journal I think 2 issues came out - they were really liquidationist but the Candian mov't never was-the Can. mov't carried on independently too - had its bookstore it oh-I'd have to go thru the cod8ment-we were never liquidationist we had carried out an entry earlier then we ceaded an entry when the NDP came alon in '61 but in Europe they didn't have an independent org.
...about 60 -&& time of NDP -check '70t document which became such a big scandal-which the League dumped - while presented in my name it was a document of PC - written for int'l factional docment -document of Hans&n and Dowson against Mandel w ittwn to transmit the experience of the Canadian section the most profound of any section in the world - transmit experience to European cdes were quite hostile to Mandel all the new revs. in 67-8-9 they looked upon Mandel who had been so long in the reformi movement with a certain amount of contempt it was so obvious &&&& when I went to Eur. particularly the Fr. cdes they had no use for Mandel ...we organized the LSA -you see we always had maintained a sort of independent operation you know-we had a bookstore =we mainteded an operation to varying degrees
...we carried regular forums, then fused forums and constituted LSA... turnover, we'd grown...35 in Toronto, 10-15 in Van....(Spector)...talented sriter, but never wrote much... I think Spector was exhausted, such harassment, vicious, bullshit, couldn't hold meetings, meetings would be broken

broken up, Stalinist goons, they really had organized goons you know, I remember going to distrubute the paper, driven off the streets you know, total different atmosphere the last 10 years, radicals have established their rights, Stalinists don't dare do anything, they couldn't do anything, in those days they'd have these big Ukrainian guys come down you know didn't know what it was all about, Finnish workers, they just push you out of the way, beat you up, tear you papers up, you have no idea how...never held a meeting without guards
...(major factional issues)...around t.u. problems CCF, not on int'l questions, the intellectual level of the Can. mov't was not very high, it was a small mov't activist mov't and it didn't participate in the int'l disputes, it lived on the documentation of the world mov't the Am. mov't was always a big factor in the development of the Canadian, in fact for a period the Canadian mov't didn't have its own paper, before 31, the cdes wrote for the Militant, Spector, Am. cdes would come on tour, Toronto was quite a center, ...dispute on the Jewish question, some cees were sympathetic to the Jewish state, Harry Clairmont, he broke from the mov't on this question, I'd have to go thru the internal bulletings...
...(tu questions)...not very serious, petty disputes, Joe Rosenthal, I ▒▒▒ ▒▒ have all the internal bulletins, some time you come down, and take a look at them, I have to pull them out they're here, I have a set, I never kipt all ny correspondence, maybe that's not bad, get overwhelmed with details, paper is the best record, ...▒▒▒ regroupment period, almost got Milt Acorn, big split in CP, many friendly to us, I wrote an article in ISR, Intercontinental Press I helped lauch it, (internal documents)... very sporadically, for 1944-1960 just that ▒▒▒ many, ▒▒▒ that's small
...we were involved in some very big issues in the t.u. mov't-the head of the CIP in Que. - Jean Marie Bedard, a Trotskyist, built the CIO/CLC operation from scratch in Montreal and wom the tramway workers over, collossal strike against some real right wing nationalist trade unionists in Quebec in the late 40's we led the big struggle in the woodwarkers union against the Stalinists, the Trotskyists played the leading role in it, subsequently we lost those Trotskyists, they got too big for the party, the ▒▒▒▒▒▒▒ leaders of the ▒▒ fight in Van. Lloyd Whalen and Tom Bradley, Bradley had been the t.u. director of the CP, and they built a powerful current in the Vancouver local against the Stalinists, Stalinists bolted caught with graft, we took over , upset, Stalinists decided to set up a Canadian national union, we took over the int'l, kipt it in the int'l, but these cdes brake from the branch because they didn't want to take orders from the branch, a small branch, inexperienced, recurring problem, unionists too big for the party, several time, difficult thing...biggest union in BC, they're not even meeting with the branch, took an opportunist line, illusion they could work with the int'l, Bradley came back but Whalen's head of the Teamsters, then United Appeal, real degeneration...oh sure, we had an organized caucus, ...oh no, took it's name from some development in Woodworkers , forget its name, but cdes known as Trotskyist but caucuses built on t.u. principles, t.u. program, you can't build a Trotskyist caucus in the unions, must be in a revolutionary situation...minumal program
...Windsor, modest , at one time, unstable industry I recruited a CPer, still around, I see him, Dehavilland, 46,47....sent Hugh (Dowson, another brother, the one that just died),...IWA caucus well known...
...biggest operation in Teamsters 60, Joe Hensby 60, we had sent Harry (Paine) in there, we eventually took over the leadership, Jim Howell recruite we had about 9 Teamsters, caucus, could elect officers, well documented, all in League, leaflets, programs, clippings, that'd probably the biggest experience, see-saw struggle in the local, Harry's able unionist, unstable person (member of Soc L.), big political problem in branch, all those youth, and these proletarians from the Teamsters, we were gonna split the branch, eveatually we lost most of them

...Montreal...modest, Jim Mitchell, KenSutherland, "L'Ouvriere", JM Bedard left with Pablo, Still with Woodworkers, Andre Bakerman works with him, Ken Sutherland, Bruce Elphinstone, they(LSA) dont't know how to work with them, good mass, bit of an opportunist (Elphinstone in Van.)
...we built the bookbinders's union, this guy's an officer in the bookbinders union...in Ottawa...one o the most experienced, Joe Meslin, head of the Cap and Millinery Union now.

PS this is a rough transcript, so if for any reason any of it is printed, it must be checked against the tape.

August 3, 1974

Glenn (Transitional Program Tendency -LSA-)

Dear John;

I think that the enclosed letter to the tendency is self-explanatory

Re SL-LSA common front at the NDP convention. I think that the position of the LSA on the NDP is very clear---it is one of differentiation and confrontation. Of course there are contradictions in its position but that is because the leadership hasn't honestly come to grips with the matter--some of them are opposed to the NDP, period, others express conditions in their support, some far reaching and others not articulating them . Some say that the position of the League hasn't been changed but only sharpened up, clarified--others say-of course it has been changed---only now has it ceased to be opportunist and tailist. This of course is a product of the degeneration of the leadership.

On the otherhand the position of the Socialist League is very clear--it is one of unconditional support --faction work of long duration and non-split perspective. Even if for some inexplicable reason the LSA leadership agreed to come together to discuss what was possible and even if it agreed to some possiblities I would myself have little confidence in it because the position of its leadership which will call the shots for its delegates is everything that the Socialist Leagues position is not. What confidence in collaboration could there be, I ask you. The fact is the LSA leadership has over the past year badly screwed up any serious Trotskyist work in the NDP.

Yes, we will hold off with the list you sent until we can consult with you further.

The LSA is out to the camp this weekend--I am going to spend time out there finishing the fireplace etc and to break out the flag.

Next weekend we are going out. We are keeping it close to the chest so as not to cause any unnecessary friction. Perhaps I will see you. Give y regards to Carmen.

comradely

Ross

August 3, 1974
#2311--40 Homewood Ave
Toronto

(Transitional Program Tendency - LSA)

To the Tendency in care of the secretary

Dear Comrades;

It is sometime now thatwe of the Socialist League took our own decision as to where we saw the leadership of the LSA/LSO going. They are the decisive factor in the evolution of the LSA/LSO

While we launched an alternative organization with the clear intention of building it into the Canadian Trotskyist movement, we adopted a non-factional attitude to those comrades who continued to retain their membership in the LSA/LSO and particularly in our relationship to your tendency with which we are in substantial political agreement. While those of us now in the SL have had a considerable experience with the degeneration of the LSA/LSO leadership which on some levels of the organization were being expressed two and even three years ago, we felt that it was perhaps necessary that others go through their own experience.

This experience has now been of some considerable duration and variety--and we fear that a dissipating process is now at work.

On t is basis we would suggest that you consider inviting one or two spokespersons of the Socialist League to meet with your attendency. Suc an action would be a very far-reaching one on your part and you might not be prepared to take it, however the matter is of such urgency that that action or someother that you might suggest is necessary in our opinion

with Trotskyist greetings

Ross Dowson

August 6th 1974

c/o Caldwell
301 8th Ave
Lasalle, Quebec

Dear comr ade Dick

I received your letter in this morning mail

Yes, we are happy that you have contacted us and are looking forward to meeting you . By all means-come in on the Staurday--we can put you up without difficulty. How are you travelling from Montreal to Toronto. Is it included in your airflite to Naigara. The bus is considerably cheaper than train or plane. and the train is almost the same price-wise and time-wise as the plane. ...and more interesting and comfortable.

Drop us a line as soon as you decide how and when you will be arriving and we will arrange to pick you up. Write to my address or should for any reason find it necessary to phone,here are two numbers—

Ross Dowson--- 416 ---- 961-4554
SL office 416 363-6755

I do not know how you came to get my address. Possibly your visit is Ted's reply to my enquiry several months ago as to any documentation you have on your orientation to the British Labour Party. I am therefore taking ~~him~~ advantage of this letter to enclose several items that will clue you in to our experiences, views and activities.

Looking forward to your arrival

comradely

Ross Dowson

Do you have any address in Montreal---- perhaps it would be interesting to drop in on La Ligue Socialiste Ouvriere at 226 est, rue Ste-Catherine. This is the Quebec homologue of the LSA. which as you probably know is part of the Lenin-Trotsky faction. The International major tendency has a group called the Groupe Marxiste Revolunnaire at 475 Marie-Anne E. It split from the LSA about two years ago. If you are interested and manage to get to see the GMR I would appreciate it if you purchased a run of their paper for our files. They do not answer to the purchase of a subscription

August 12, 1974
40 Homewood Ave

Dear Darrell;

I am enclosing a cheque for $9.00.

I and Julie invited a select number of guests up to Camp Poundmaker who stayed over Saturday night in the cabins. Twenty nine did so and here is the money we asked them for for use of those facilities.

We did a few things of a maintenance character. All the rails that various persons have unfortunately been tempted to use as fire wood have all been taken down to the fence line where they can be erected into the boundary line fence first opportunity. We also got started under my supervision in pruning the area in front of the lodge of garbage vegetation so that the maples and oaks and baswood have a chance to grow. We also erected (replaced) the post for the volley-ball net. Unfortunately we were unable to cement it in as we had no sand. That can be done next weekend or so. I was hoping to finishe the painting of the ceiling and joints in the lodge but unfortunately it was a short weekend and the weather was so good that I was unable to mobilize the forces this time to do that.

Comradely

Ross Dowson

August 18, 1974
40 Homewood Ave., Apt 2311
Toronto

Dear Norman; Penner — Clarden Toronto

I was pleased to receive your nice note e closed with Socialism and the CCF some months back. It was misplaced along with some correspondence with Gary O'Brien and only now turned up.

I was glad to be able to loan it to Joe while he was interviewing Stewart Smith. I am looking forward to reading what Smith had to say about it and other matters. I had some shocking confrontat ons with Smith when I ran for mayor of Toronto. In his efforts to regain his controllership he went out of his way to defend [illegible] and identify himself [illegible] in the most craven way with the miserable Tory administration which I of course attacked. Incidently I have a copy of Sam Carr's "From Opposition to Assassination"-in defence of the Moscow Frame-up Trials and the ter or against Trotskyism-should Joe or others contemplate interviewing Carr and not be acquainted with it.

It is only now in the face of the opportunities of the new radicalization in this country (and of course such opportunities as in Portugal and Greece) that I feel the full impact of what we have been paying for the Stalinist destruction of the cadre that came out of the poast World War I and the pre-World War II radiculization here.

I managed to spend some time with Gary O'Brien. Combining his research on Spector with active participation in the Ottawa Waffle campaign, he strikes me as a most excellent type. Thanks for introducing him to me.

fraternally

Ross Dowson

August 23, 1974

Don

Don
2165 West 4th Ave
Vancouver, B.C.

Dear Don;

It was certainly good to receive your little memo.

I am glad that you like the first issue. Last night I just finished working with the comrades on the September issue. There are some problems with it as you will note---all part of the big experience we are going through. The comrades involved were leading activists in the LSA/LSO but aside from John Darling whom I sure you remember had little real connection with the puting out of a paper.

Well,we have taken the decision to put out a monthly, we are expanding our office facilities and very shortly Gordon Doctorow will be coming on staff. He was the organizer of the North Metro branch , one of three in Toronto that have condensed down to one. Probably you do not know him as he was in Kitchener-Waterloo for an earlier ~~yuk~~ period.

Thanks for your kind offer to help set up things when we should make a tour. Right now what we would most appreciate are the subs which you are doing well on and information and appreciation of what is going on in the left in BC---in the NDP and the trade unions in particular. Are you active in the NDP in BC and will you be going to the coming convention. I gather you will be back from your holidays in time. We would appreciate very much hearing about the convention even if you had no more time than to give us your impressions.

Stu Sinclair dropped down to our Marxist economics class last night. We did not have much time to talk but he told me ~~xxx~~ he was in Vancouver and had some worthwhile discussions with Nick and Sheila and Maurice.Stu will probably joining the League shortly. He went through the whole thing as a member of the LSA-EC-PC, from the ultra left Revolutionary Communist Tendency--into the anrarcho-Trotskyist RMG and on

Of course I am all for setting things up there in Vancouver, but these comrades who are grabbing up the tasks have to do things in their own time. Things are moving faster than they dreamed and they are responding all the way. Your note and efforts are quite inspiring for them

We are looking forward to hearing from you. How is your brother. Give him regards--and to Carol and Bob and company.

comradely Rods Dowson

August26, 1974

Dear friends;

We are now in a position to present what we consider to be a good working draft of an agreement that as parties of Camp Roundtaker incor. we can discuss and come to agreement on.

We are need to set up a meeting at a time and a place suitable to all. We are suggesting

Monday September 9 at 8 p.m.
or
Sunday September 8 at 8 p.m.

Could you please inform us if it is absolutely impossible for you to attend a meeting on one of these nights. We will let you know the outcome of this poll as soon as we receive your replies.

On your behalf we have paid the 1974 taxes on the property--$193.75 and laid out funds for gravelling the road to the sum of $57.60

According to our estimation your share of these essential costs is as follows;

Lois Ballard	$5.00
George Bryant	7.61
Rose Dorson	7.61
Brian Hughes	7.61
Steve Harding	8.97
Victor Nash	$1.22
John Nicoll	7.61
Meyer Shapiro	7.61
Toronto Social	
Science	$21.10
Hydro Solar Tim	8.97

paid · prefers Sunday paid
Monday No — Sunday yes paid
paid prefers Monday paid
paid
prefer Monday paid
prefer Monday paid
NO Sunday prefer Monday

14 62 Trafalgar St London

Please enclose your cheque for the sum opposite your name, along with the information that we have requested as to your choice of meeting date. Address the cheque and your reply to

Rose Dorson, Apt 2311
40 Homewood Ave., Toronto M4Y 2K2

Fraternally

Rose Dorson

Sent [redacted]
$20 for camp Bell
Marten

85 King Street East

Toronto

September 4, 1974

Ron

Ron
Vancouver

Dear Ron;

Well by now you have received the second issue. As I told Don there are lots of little problems, however I think you will agree we are straighteneing them out. One of them is that we do not yet have anyone on staff. Gord Doctorow is in the process of straightneing up his personal life so that he can move in by about October. This will give us the time to accumulate the necessary funds. too.

The last issue of the paper we took into all the radicals. This issue we are taking into the unions and the NDP. We distributed the Labor Day demos last weekend both here in Toronto and in Hamilton, along with the big TTC workers rally. This weekend we will cover the Ontario NDP convention where we will have five fdelegates. We will also be hitting the big day care rally with the special article that Pat ~~Sumbx~~ Shuls wrote on the back page. She is a leading spokeswomen in this movement. And we will be hitting the next Goodyear membership meeting where we have some good contacts.

The trade union movement has been starting to move over this last several months and we are going to have to develop ~~xxx~~ good writers on this area. The last issue made a stab at it. I was glancing through the latest Old Mole and Labor Challenge —— it is startling to see how neithhr are adressing this union motion in any way at all.

We are also taking on these big distrubtions as we are out to pull together as many subs as we can so that we can hope to get second class mailing rights.I see from your note that you sent in a sub for Roger Perkins. Suprised to see that he is still around. At one time I had hopes that we would recruit him--that was back in the early sixties. But then he wnet to Vancouver and I gather joined up with Jack Scott who was then leading the Maoist operation. He was a bit of an archivistthen. I hope that his interest in our press is more than that

Did any of you comrades get to the BC NDP convention ? Are any of you members and activists ? The reports in the Toronto press are sketchy but I see the women's ministry loomed large in the struggle. I do not know whether you saw our document The Subversion of our NDP Orientation--which we presented to the LSA before our pulling out. One of the big bones of contention along with others was the womens ministry. The LSA switched its line overnight on that without any discussion. It had supported the demand for the ministry only latter to dump it as a class collabroationist demand to restructure the bourgeois state ,not smash it. They then developed their theory that while it was correct to call upon workers to vote the NDP into office it was incorrect for us to support it once it was in office because they suddenyl found out the NDP in office is a bourgeois government and we cannot support bourgeois governments --an NDP one not being essentially different from a Liberal or Tory one. What I thought we had was a labor party in government

that all we had was a labor party in parliamentary office--and that we supported the government but not the state---that parliament was only one of the supperficial trappi gs of the bourgeois state--and that we would make demands on a labor government in the direction of expsosing the bourgeois nature of the state.

But as I was saying---did any of you comrades get to the NDP convention. We would appreciate anything that you could send us for the next issue of the Forward. /..either written ,partially written or elippings.

Looking forward to hearing from you first opportunity

fraternally

Ross Dowson

September 13, 1974

Dear Steve (-?)

150 00

I picked up the cheque from John Wilson. That must bring us well along the way. I will phone Darrell and check out what was turned over to him.

The meeting was all sweetness and light. Julie was ill and Bryant tdid not turn up but everyone else attended. We went through te draft that I sent you and made a number of changes. The one that I thought the LSA would rangle about went through without comment. At the last meeting of myself, Vic H and Darrel, Darrel insisted on removing the word guestsfrom the section that said owners and family had full access to the lodge and facilities. I told him that I wanted that word included but he did not move so I said that I will take it up at this meeting. When he read that section he had put the word ~~xxxx~~ back in. The other changes were in my oppinion only clarifying —oh yes the insurance on the lodge paid by the league is to be made out in favor of the LSA and the corporation jointly

I asked Joan N and she told me that they are not planning anything at the camp the rest of the year. So at the next SL branch meeting we will be deciding when to hold our corn weiner roast out there. It would be good if you and Susan can come along and you can survey what nature has been doing to your lot over the last year.

We finished our Marxist economics classes last nite and we will probably be revruiting tow or three persons from around it and our general activity in the next week or so. John Glen phoned me to tell me that the tendency has been assured its discussion towards the end of this month. The leadership is not replying to the tendency document but standing on Porters report to the last plenum and the political resolution. It is not too clear just now but that discussion which will be pharical will end the experience of several of the comrades with the League and they will be coming over to the Socialist League.

Our internvention at the NDP convention was very good. Some MLA's and and MP with assoted other leftists at the last moement issued a left statement which they hope will open up some discussion in rhe party. The statement is a very useful one to open up discussion and establish connections for us. We will probably publish it in the coming issue. We sold about 25 subs and about $50 assorted literature from our display. Stu, Bill M and Dave Piatti went up and managed to move around establishing connections with unionists. The paper was well received. The LSA did not even send Kate up to the council meeting to appeal her expulsion after all their talk in their paper. Well Insee now from the Saskatchewan Commonwealth that the Alberta section of the NDP is expelling the two comrades that the LSA is running in the municipal arean. So they continue to comporomisre Trotskyism in the eyes of what left elements there are in the NDP

Probably you dont get the Old Mole. Last issue they had a small box in their paper telling the gay liberation movement in a few off the cuff words what is wrong with it. Typical. Maurice Filod has sent us a copy of his indignant reply.

See you soon

Ross

September 18, 1974

R. Dowson #2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto

Identical letters sent to:

1) Irving Abella
Glendon
2) Hoan Avakumovic, UBC
3) Joseph Starobin

Dear Mr. Abella

Yesterday I received a communcation that I will not be getting the Canada Council Grant you were helping me apply for. From the letter the decision is final

I would like to thank you for your encouragement

It only helped to further convince me of the importance of the project. Without the aid of the Council of course it will be quite difficult. I will now have to seek some kind of employment that will pay sufficient to sustain me and at the same time leave me a fair amount of time to take on the project on my own

Thanks for your encouragement.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

Ross Dowson #2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto
September 18, 1974

The Canada Council
P.O. Box 1047
Ottawa, Ont.

Andre Fortier
Director

Dear Sir;

Thank you for your letter of the 11th

Naturally I was disappointed to read that the Council was unable to include my project in its 469 grants.

The process of talking over the project with Professors Starobin, Abella and Avakumovic, and filing my application with the Council, only convinced me all the more of the importance of the project which I have been turning over in my mind for some years.

I intend to proceed with it as best I can on my own resources . At this time this will mean seeking some kind of employment that will sustain me and at the same time allow me to do the work with what time I will have over and above that, as I do not know of any other sources that would in anyway aid me to carry forward the project.

I am therefore wondering if you are in a position to inform me if there is any way of keeping that application in a "live" file of the Council--- or---whether I should make a new application at a future date in the possibility that the competition may not be so feirce or a second cold thought may win approval of my project.

I would appreciate any suggestions that you might be in a position to make in this respect.

sincerely

Ross Dowson

September 28, 1974
Ross Dowson #2311
40 Homewood Ave
Toronto

Canada Council
151 Sparks Street
Ottawa

attention Ms. Pamela MacDonald

Dear Ms. MacDonald

Thank you very much for your informative response to my enquiries via letter and phone.

I never ever was able to obtain anything on Explorations other than a one sheet interim document dated December 1973. I was therefore unaware of what appears to be its more limited scope with regards to subsitence allowances ,etc. Besides there was a bit of a rush in the switching over of my application from the Research Grants section to Exploration which came with some parallel last minute thinking both on my part and Mrs Mireille Badour.

I am enclosing a new version of my project budget. Would you kindly replace my old one which spanned a three year period with this new new one that covers a one year period. I am confident that should the Council see its way clear to meet my request that this one year grant will have worthwhile results upon which both myself and others could add to or build upon. With some substantial concrete results perhaps a further grant would be considered favorably by the Council at a later date.

Thanks for your kind attnetion to this particular problem

sincerely

Ross Dowson

(undated, Found in 1974)

85 King Street E
Toronto, Canada

l'internationale
39 rue Piat
Paris XXe France

Dear comrades;

Comrade Franz Modlik was so good as to send us a copy of a resolution that you adopted at your fourth International Conference . The back page listed the names and addresses of the various sections of your international tendency. We note that the publication of your Greek comrades is circulated from your address there in Paris.

There is a considerable number of Greek's living in Toronto at this time --many of them sympathetic to the labor party formation here called the New Democratic party are subscribers to our paper FORWARD. Would it be possible for you to send us say ten copies of this publication so we could see what interest we could arouse in it. Send us the bill along with the material and we will pay promplty.

We are taking the initiative of sending you a copy of our monthly paper on a regular basis in the hope that you will reciprocate by sending us l'internationale.

comradely

Ross Dowson

October 1, 1964
Toronto

Dear Dave

There are a couple of guys in your area who it would be worthwhile getting to know;

Ron Williams
108 Victoria Street West #28, Whitby 668 6033

For some years now he has been coming into the odd LSA affair. He is Black (a West Indian I believe) and about 35 or so years old. He is a worker and I would gather has a general idea of our views. Very easy going and relaxed and I am sure xmx he would be pleased to meet you. I would gather he works in the Dunlop Ribber plant out there so it should be easy to establish some kind of rapport. He would be interested to hear what is going on in Auto. I havent seen him for somewhile but I came across his address in our contact file. Possibly some one met him on the street. I do not think he has a sunscription to the paper.

Then there is Gary O'Brien
67 Admiral Road
Ajax 942 1856

He is a student who has just graduated from Carleton University. It would be good if you could drop in on him in the next 4 or 5 days as he is going off to Europe by about the 15th and will be away for about a year. Really too bad as I am sure he would join us if we could establish a more practical working relationship with him. He has studied the radical ,the communist movement in Canada nad he wrote his thesis on Maurice Spector who was the political leader of the early CP here in Canada and became the first Trotskyist on North America winning James P. Cannon to his view. When he was in Ottawa he worked around Waffle. His whole background is the student radical movement but he would be interested in meeting a revolutionary worker. You have lots to tell him. I am sure he would be pleased to meet you.

You can introduce yourself most easily to both of these guys bu telling them that I told you about them and thought they would like to meet you. Rom Williams I would think has some fellows around him. He has lived in Whtiby for years

comradely

Ross

October 16, 1974
Foward
Box 778
Adelaide Street P.O.
Toronto

Rom
3049 East 56
Vancouver

Dear Ron;

Sorry to be so long in taking up your note.

Too bad about the mix-up. Your material would have been a big help. I suppose the postman hasn't bothered to try to acquaint himself with the personal names of the tenants in this building--all the more that in the last month three offices have been just let out to new tenants--not that it is a very large building however.

We are at a loss to understand ~~hhxm~~ how persons have not received the second issue of the paper. Lynda Doohoo is a competent administrator and she assures me that the Vancouver lists are in good order and were mailed with the rest. Now the third issue has gone out. Should you hear of anyone not receiving their copy we would certainly appreciate being told. We havent bothered the post office about issue number two but should this happen again there are many things that we can do
assuming you received it

As you can see from the 3rd issue Wayne went ahead anyway with an item on the BC convention. If I am not mistaken he checked it out with Cynthia Floof. At anyrate we have received no cpmplaints. The coming issue will carry the statement put out by the left. The situation does indeed look very fawvrable for the building of an effective left wing. The constituency associations to varying degrees cannot help but reflect the atmosphere at the convention. The Ontario left statement is having a good effect on the constituency associations. ...however they have not by any means recovered from the expulsion-defection of the Waffle. But Waffle is in great difficulties and it would seem that some of them may well be heading back into the NDP. I noted from an internal Waffle report of their federal election campaign the admit that a great many of their supporters did not respond to their campaign but either worked in or supported the NDP campaign. The key problem confronting them is the NDP which they now admit they have been unable to get around. Last weekend they had a council meeting in Ottawa and suffered a cold split. The whole op ration has been very bureaucratic and an opposition of some considerable scope developed against the Lawer leadership--Watkins is up in the Yukon working with Indians. Some of the left opposition consider themselves to be Trotskyists but have a sectarian position in the NDP. We have been working with them but the whole operation is so clique ridden it is hard to have much impact. Bunny Batten who Don will surely remember has been a leading spokesperson for them at York dampus where she is on staff. She and a friend who is on the staff of the nurses union came over to have a discussion with me prior to the Ottawa conference--and one of our comrades who has managed to move into Waffle reported that she very effectively carried our views there. We will be covering the conference in our next issue.

With the number three issue I think that the comrades have started to hit the stride that in my opinion Forward should try to realize.

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With the number three issue I think that the comrades have started to hit the stride that in my opinion Forward should try to realize.

I am enclosing a copy of the statement that some of the members of the Transitional Program Tendency in the LSA just issued. We have laready recruited two of these comrades and last night recruited another former LSA member and a very good contact--our first connection with the autoworkers in ~~the~~ Oshawa. This coming weekend someof the comrades will be going over to St Catherines to see what can be done with a couple of other comrades who were associated with the TPT

We have now taken on a comrade part time staff until Gordon Doctorow can settle some of his personal matters to come on full time by about Christmas. Gordon has a very high paying job in computers and accumulated debts related to his income so he is now on a crach program to scale them down so that he can operate on the kind of income we can cope with. My feeling is that we will not really be in a position to sned anyone across the country until Gord comes on staff---although Stu Sinclair who we will recruit shortly was talking about making himself available for somekind of tour in a monht or so.

A top priority right now is our general fall activity--and seeing if we can come across a store--a street front operation-- which can also provide a hall--something in the order of the Yonge Cumberland set -up. But the rents are outrageous.

I am glad to hear that you are thinking of moving around the NDP again.And I must say that we really appreciate the effort you spend in gatheirng the material on the convention even though we never got it in time. What do you think of sending us clippings from the best Vancouver daily so that we can follow the more important Vancouver and BC area developments. No doubt you read one of the papers on a regular basis. If you were to just mark up the interesting articles and when it gets to around out deadline clip them and send them off to us. Of course if you were able to make some comments on some of them that would be even better.

Give my regards to Don and any of the "old gang" to mange to keep in contact. And looking forward to hearing from you any and everytime you are up to it.

comradely

Ross Dowson

Yes, I think that the box address is the best one until our office is staffed on a full time basis.

October 1974

for a Free Independent Soviet Ukraine!

THREE ARTICLES BY

LEON TROTSKY

- The Ukrainian Question-April 22, 1938
- To the Ukrainian Comrades in Canada-October 20, 1934
- Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads- July 30, 1939

Forward Publishing Association

INTRODUCTION

From the brilliant and revolutionary pen of Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, come these three articles in defense of national self-determination in the Ukraine. Although Trotsky was instrumental in the founding of the Soviet Union, its army, and government, he rejected the Russification policies of the Soviet government while continuing to defend the tremendous social gains of the October Revolution.

In these articles, he cogently shows how Stalin and his bureaucratic cohorts inverted the Leninist principle of national self-determination for oppressed nationalities and turned this principle into its very opposite. Trotsky traces the root of this policy to the total degeneration of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from an instrument of proletarian internationalism to an instrument serving the greedy interests of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

In addition, Trotsky polemicizes against "sectarian muddleheads" who in the name of anti-Stalinism and Leninism reject the demands of the Ukrainian nation for its self-determination, i.e. separation. To their false concept of relations between socialist nations, Trotsky counterposed the slogan "For a Free, Independent Soviet Ukraine".

For this revolutionary defense of the Leninist principle of national self-determination and for his unremitting efforts to counterpose revolutionary Marxism to reactionary Stalinism, Trotsky was assassinated by Stalin's hired executioner in 1940. But Stalin failed to kill the ideas which Trotsky stood for and which appear so eloquently 24 years later in this pamphlet.

October 1974

November 18, 1974

Coldwater

Dear Art; (Grey) (also) Art K.-

Yes, it was a useful visit ,despite Guy's inability to attend.

Looking back we should have made some opportunity to have a frank discussion with Art K re the Socialist League...probably I should have taken a later Sunday bus and we could have done that on Sunday morning. I think that the discussion must be had., [redacted] and fairly soon.

Of course if Art comes down on Sunday I can make a special point that you, I and Guy(?) have such a discussion with him. If he is not coming down on Sunday I think that you should take an evening off to go over to see him and set it up so that you can have a free discussion outside,at this time,of the diversionary contributions of his wife . I dont doubt that he is expecting such a discussion even though he obviously wanted to evade it on Saturday night.

Of course the discussion should not contain any element of ultimatum with regards to our continued relation with him--even in this bastard LSA/SL set up that prevails right now in Orillia.

[redacted] I do not really have any idea what the problem is between himself and ourselves of course. He seemd quite disinterested even in Cynthia and Maurices statement. Incidentally Maurice phoned me last night to ask me how he should conduct himself in the NDP constituency elections. In passing he told me that the majority leadership in Eueope turned the Lenin-Trotsky Factions demand fc an emergency world congress back by raising the whole question of what is happenir in Canada. He says that Nick is waiting for us to make the next move .

fraternally

Ross

mailing address
FORWARD Box 778 Adelaide St P.O.
Toronto M5C2K1

November 27, 1974

Sheila T
1008 #2 Road
Richmond, B.C.

Dear Sheila

It was very good to hear from you and to receive the donation to our press fund. I am glad you find the paper useful. All in all, despite its many faults it represents a big achievement. Last Sunday we had our SL conference--a sort of 7 or 8 month balance sheet . I think that everyone was impressed . We have 26 members who are working very well together and we have a widening influence.

After the elections of a new executive one of the comrades ,Alice K remarked on the totally different concept that we have of the executive and ourselves. Just 7 months ago almost everyone was worried,trying to digest the previous experience--- our pulling out of the LSA/LSO, the meaning of the degeneration of the LSA and how to move forward. But on Sunday everything worked well--it was obvicus that we had laid firm foundations to carry the work forward where the LSA/LSO left off.

Of course these comrades were not exactly inexperienced. All of them had been leaders in the LSA, on campus, in the NDP, in the youth--but none had been on staff and over the past year had been undergoing a process of being pushed away and pulling away . Now they have been taking on all the responsibilities--we have even had to make a decision as to who of two comrades should move to go on staff. Gord Doctorow is now clearing off the debts that he had been accumulating on a very good income dereived from a top notch job in order to go on staff at what we pay by mid-January. We have established an excellent headquarters in the center of the city--three rooms--one of which can hold about 30 persons--and now we are all agreed that we must move out to get something like the old Yonge Street and Cumberland set-up---a bookstore with hall space behind. We will be moving in that direction right after Gord comes on staff

Of course the paper has been the biggest experience, and not just for Wayne R It seems obvious to me that Kilie K and Alice have really developed as good wirters. And we are circulating it well--this Saturday and Sunday we will be carrying on a min-dub drive on homes of workers who are carrying NDP municipal election signs. We are distributing the paper free to all the working class activities in the Toronto area--and selling it only at the distinctly revolutionary meetings. So the paper is having quite an impact . We are getting a good letters to the editor response. On the basis of my recent article on Canada's branch plant imperialism the leading figure in the Marxist Institute ,Steve More has asked me to read over a major study that he has written on Canada Relations. This is a very important group of "intellectuals" who have been holding classes on Marxism and Canadian [illegible] bring in

to discuss his document of 130 pages. "e will see how the discussion goes but at this point it seems to me to open the possiblities of our discussing with a cobsiderable number of very serious persons, revolutionists, the whole range of Trotskyism. His document cuts across our branch plant imperialism line and I think that the article on Maurice Spector and Canadian independence would have caught him up short. Incidently he dismisses the LSA in his document for its dismissing the impact of American imperialism on the Canadian economy and political scene.

But I must say that in my opinion the SL at this time cannot be overly concerned about making breaks like the above suggests. The building of the paper is our number one task and then some very effective classes thr ugh which we educate ourselves and those persons immediately around us.

John Glenn came in from Oswekon with Carmen and their little newly arrived baby boy, and Regula also came to the Sunday conference. I had the impression that she was tired and somewhat discouraged It is inevtiable that a struggle of the kind we have been through should find some able comrades slip off onto the sideline--but no it looks like I was wrong in Regula. Nayne tells me that she asked to write the NDP notes in the paper which we are going to be running on a regular basis. Of all the comrades in Toronto Regula in my opinion had the best feel for our NDP oreitnation. Hans was next and he will be back here at the New Year since the big project that he was working on in Germany folded up. Claire phoned me up today to ask me to come up tomorrow night. We will see what she wants to do. I thought that her document was gnerally a very good one.. All in all the losses have not been so great as I had feared. The comrades who went off into the RMG have suffered badly. ..many of them just falling away and several of them setting up the Saprtacus League. --possibly you have seen their paper Workers Vanguard(our old name) The last issue had me in quotation marks ordering the workers of Canada that they must go through the NDP and no if ands about it.

As for me I am busy pushing every one out to take hold of things. Of course I cannot resist the pressure to give the odd forum and the odd class myself. After putting out the first issue of Forward, Wayne took up the challenge, and after laying down the law about not going on staff, Gord moved out. I am managing to make out by doing researhc for lecturer's thesis on Toronto labor history and expecting to get a government grant about mid-December to write the history of the movement.

Possibly you know that both Ron and Don D have offered tu put one of us up and arrange something should we come out. We urged Rom to get into the NDP out there. We need a little time before moving out past St Catherines and Orillia. We have moved faster, firmer and farther than nearly everyone including the majority of SLers themselves believed--and we will probably end up moving across the country faster than I right now think is necessary and desireable. But we are looking forward to seeing you and being informed about what goes out there. Yes, I think that both Maurice and Cynthia just got fed up and nationalism and gay liberation are just an excuse. But they are both valueable people who if we can keep in touch will probably make the moves later on when we will have made it easier

warmest regards to you and the family

Ross Dowson

SOCIALIST LEAGUE

85 King Street East
Toronto

December 12, 1974

Prinsep
Vancouver, B.C. 3435 West 8th VANC.

Dear Dick;

It was good to receive your short message yesterday. I noticed that some item that we sent to you came back--address unknown.

Yes, everything is going OK--considering the many problems now confronting Trotskyists in Canada.

. The Socialist League is going much better than I had even hoped. Today the prohter will be delivering our fifth issue. The paper is getting a good circuation throughout the left in the greater Toronto area and it is serving as a tremendous political experience for all involved.

I would say that the SL has a very hefty slice of the continuing cadre of Canadian Trotskyism---about 28 now--Hugh D, Stu Sinclaar, Pat Shulz, Hairny Paine, Jim Mitchell, Harry Kopyto, John Darling, Gord Doctorow and a promising group of the younger comrades. We have the York campus Trotskyist operation , We have the key Orillia comrades and have the only on-going relations with the St Catharines Trotskyists. I gave the opening address to the Socialist Coalition that Charlie has started at Brock University in St Kitts last week--and Charlie is talking of setting up a Socialist Forum in the working class community which we will work with.

Gordon Doctorow will be coming on staff in Mid-Janaury which will aldow us to move more effectively.He has been living on the high income of his computer job and accumulating normal debts--so he has to work until then so that he can get into shape financially and make the move to our wages. I do not know whether you know Gofd but he was the leading comrade on the Kitchenr-Waterloo campus for some years,and then organizer for the North Metro LSA ..the Richmond Hill box in the Labor Challenge list--which in reality is no more.

Stu Sinclair will in all probability be going out to Vancouver over the holiday weekend to put Forward around, pick up subs. Later when Gord gets settled in here in Toronto we will probably send him on a cross-Canada promotion of the paper.

The paper is getting lots of bounce as you can see from our letters to the editor column. Alas, we are not going to get much out of the Waffle for a period. The LSA sectarianism and its completely false not to speak of dishonest handling of this more important experience on the left could not be overcome by our efforts. I think you knowXXXXX Bunny Ritchie-Batten (her name now is Virginia Hunter) from years back. She and an organizer in the hospital workers contacted me a month or so ago. She told me that she used to follow LC but when those stupid and even dishonest articles, largely by Dennis Lomas commenced to appear she threw it away and out of her mind.

It is a grave error not to see nationalism as a key element in the radicalization and to present this nationalism as nothing but bourgeois and reactionary, but it is another matter to continually lie about the declared position of Waffle. Now as was obvious some years back an important element in Waffle is going Marxish and even consciously Trotskyist. In Ontario particularly at York, they consider themselves Trotskyist--certainly not LSA which they consider a joke, and not the SL because they do not agree with us on the NDP--so they think in terms of the English International Socialists.

In the next week or so I will be hearing what I will be doing to make a living. I have been doing research at a very low low wage waiting to hear from the Canada Council. Now it is upon us. I am asking for a grant to work on the history of the movement. If I dont get it we will have to go off on some other track regretfully. We are also moving here in Toronto towards setting up a bookstore which John Darling wants to integrate with a modest printing shop--of the mini-print character. Perhaps I will end up with a bookstore again. The Toronto Vanguard Bookstore has gone down the drain--nothing but a front door Pathfinder operation They are probably maintaining it because it would look bad if they closed it at this time .

And so it goes. When will you be coming this way for a visit?

comradely

Ross Dowson
40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2

85 King Street East
Toronto

December 13, 1974

December 13, 1974

St Catharines

Dear Charlie; (1.)

Just a note of thanks for the opportunity to address the Socialist Coalition at Brock. I hope that my contribution was what you had in mind. Sorry that I spoke overtime and cut back some of the possibilities for you to do a little more plumbing of the possiblities of those who turned out.

I think that the concept of the coalition is an excellent one and would very much like to be kept informed of its progress And did I understand that you are thinkimg of trying to operate some kind of Socialist Forum off campus. I am sure the SL comrades are all for that and would like to help you set off such an operation in anyway they can.....if you dont have technicians and facilities to get off leaflets, we would be pleased to collaborate in their composition and running off here in Toronto, if you need speakers we would be pleased to supply some. ---perhaps we could arrange to repeat our Palestinian meeting in St Kits, if you wanted. Ask us and we will see what we can do to help carry such a useful project.

The two fellows who snacked with us in the lounge escorted me downtown to the restaurant near the bus depot and we had a worthwhile discussion. The NDPer loaned me a document on national consciousness among the Canadian bourgeoisie which is of interest to me--he had to scrounge to take the bus and have a cup of coffee so I did not ask him for a subscription. The other fellow struck me as a very serious element. I promised to correspond with him with regards to other material on Marxism and Science however I neglected to get his name and address. Would you get it from him and send it alomg to me as soon as convenient.

I was serious when I told you that I would like to read your essay on the maximization of profits. Always looking for material that might be used in the paper--and of course trying to learn. I hope you wont forget to send along anything that you write that you think might be interesting and useful.

Incidnetly I send a copy of the previous forward to Sam G with the articel about Spector--I was expecting some bounce. Give him a ring. Hope to see all you comrades at our New Years affair which should be relaxing, danceable etc.,etc.

comradely

Ross

40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto
December 14, 1974

Gary O'Brien
Toulouse

Dear Gary

It is good to hear from you at long last. I was toying with writing to your folks --figuring that you had surely written them-- and asking for your address. Then I thought ,not knowing of your relations with your folks maybe you ha ven't written them. At anyrate the problem has been solved

Good to see that you are settled in and orientating yourself politically--more later.

I am enclosing the last two issues of Forward which is my most ipoxtant area of activity in every respect. Politically, of course but also from the point of view of building what I am able in this country. As you ~~xxxxxxx~~ can probably grasp,the publication of a political paper is a collosal experience for all involved. It has in its short five issues pulled everything together after the LSA/LSO experience, which was quite demoralizing for several. Until you have to come to pubaish something you have little cause to seriously come to grips with your ideas ecept in the most general way. Waht do we think has to be said to the class in general, what are our concrete views on the questions that are of concern to the various forces on the left---then how are we going to put it out--to build a writing and production team--and how are we going to pay for it and circulate it. All very big problems that have taken a co siderable amount of time and energy of every revolutonist in every country.

And so we are pulling the League together. There are many problems with the League and with the paper,but we have made some big strides. In many areas we are still very amatuerish--the mechancis of proof reading, layout, headline writing which should be easily resolved but are not when you do not have a staff abd authoritative opinion.
A couple of weeks ago we had a conference where we had reports and discussion on our major areas of activity and elected officers. EVeryone considered it highly successful. We have an Orillia operation and expect soon to have something going in St Catharines. One of the comrades will be spending his Christmas holidays in Vancouver and we expect to pull some hing togtehr there.

I should be receiving word from the Canada Council officialdom any day now. So I am not yet sure jist how I will be making a living ---that of course is a big question determining many others. The comrades are thinking in terms of setting up a ~~xxxx~~ bookstore which will be attractive to radiclizing forces and educate those who think they are there. Harry Fistell's Book World has gone bankrupt and the Vanguard Bookstore is nothing more than a front office for Pathfinder whose selection is still of necessity somewhat limited. One of the comrades who is quite able in graphic work wants us to get sufficient space so that he could set up a commercial operation--and we need a public hall. If the grant doesn't come through it is not excluded that

I will operate the bookstore. This is all up in the air but comning towards a settlement.

We are having a forum on the Middle East with the leadinf representative of The Arab -Palestinian Association speaking with our very expert Harry Kopyto tonight. There may be some rukus as this organizations headquarters at the First Unitarian church was bombed a couple of days ago. We are holding a big New Years social, and we are lining up some classes for our contacts. The Waffle conflict is the biggest concern amongst the revolutionists. Unfortunately this operation is quite sectarian and it has been very difficult for us to feed anything into the debate. Laxer and co pany are standing on the sidelines of this convenion this weekend to see the outcome. Already some elements have gone back to the NDP,,but others consider themselves Trotskyists. A major factor that stands in the way of Canadian Trotskyism having any input is the rotten position of the LSA on Waffle. Absurd as it may seem now they have been characterizing the Waffle as bourgeois nationalist--for us specifically is their inability to come to grips with the NDP. The Trotskyist current in Waffle, largely at York is playing around with the International Socialist--the English variety--State capitalists.

Some opening are developing in the unions. I am in close advisory relations with some Trotskyist sympathizers in the big Good Year local in New Toronto. Their slate came within 30 and 60 votes of taking the top posts in the recent elections. Thirty ballots extra appeared in the count and we have just forced a new election. The leadership has lost the local, in that they can no longer carry a majority in the local meetings on the basis of present turn-out. We defeate them two to one on a new elections at a meeting they worked hard to build up their attendance. We have some good contact developing both in CUPE and CSAO.

I hope that the paper,despite typos, gives you a feeling of what we are doing and what we think should and can be done in this period. Everyone in the League was pleased withyour contribution on Spector. The LSA people that I have spoken to or heard about have not yet gone farther than to say that it is interesting--very interesting. A Steve More who is a leading person in the Marxist Institute here was quite fascinated when I gave him a copy in the course of a discussion I had with him about a 140 page document he prepared on Canada-US relations which he asked me along with Leo Johnson and others to comment on. The Johnson--and More thes is is that a turn is taking place and that the Canadian capitalist class are strenghthening their position vis a vis the US capitalist class influence in the Canadian economy and that they are strenghtening their interests as an independent imperialist power. After hearing me question many aspects of his document and loaning him some as yet unpublished material on the Canadian banks I think he was somewhat unnerved. But I havent had an expected further seesion to see how he has resolved this matter--of considerable interest as the Institute is opening its coming ecducactional sessions at OISE on CanadapUS relations and nationalism. I have written a couple of letters to persons who knew Spector to lear of their opinion--but it is yet twoo early. Have no doubt--it was well read. Various people have not yet worked out what they want to say about it. Our friend Avakumovic's view would be quite interesting. Last Fall he was bringing his 500 page study on the Cdn CP to a close. Did you get any bounce from him. He got your longer study and he also subscribes to the paper Did Rodney respond ? Yes, I think persons interested havent yet ~~got~~ hold of your contribution.

I see you have Rouge down as ultra left. There is no question that there are strong ultra left currents in it. Have you met the Toulouse comrades ? If I am not mistaken the 1970 convention was held in Toulouse and when there I had the opportunity to acquainted myself with several of the Toulouse comrades and their newly opened headquarters. I had a very good ipmression of them. Whe n I was in Europe the comrades of La Lutte had made some approaches to Rouge for unificication. At the time I thought the possiblities were very good however the majority mf leadership of the Ligue seemed very uneasy about it and I think were instrumental in shelving it. At the time I had an unfavourable impression that La Lutte had certain undesireable clandestine characteristics. Of course a unification is a very difficult matter and can only be approached if there is a real and genuine desire for it. They carried on quite a close collaboration for sometime. The Lambertists while I was there suddenly proejcted unification but I did not think it was very serious--it was so maneuverist --and that is one thing no one can m maneuver with. Of course I held my own opinion about La Lutte-Rouge unification very close to my chest --to speak along anything more than general lines you have to be really involved. And have you come in contact with Sous Le Drapeau Du Socialisme or L'Internationale put out by the group around Michel Pablo ? Yes we get Information Ouvriere here at the office on an exchange basis. They have a few co-thinkers here in Tobomto and an operation of some sort in Montreal that has trade union connections. Their Toronto people are xmxch liquidationists into the NDP in my opinion. When they heard about us xhxqx their Montreal and Paris group made contact. I concluded that they wanted us to fuze with their Toronto comrades. At that time the forces grouped around the International Secretariat appeared to be heading for a split---at best they can now be said to maintain an uneasy alliance. We told the Lambertists that we caould see no purpose on in our small formation ,most of whom had supported the Lenin-Trotsky faction , shifting over to the Lambertist OCI, even should we have found ourselves in substantial agreement with them--that we would be thinking of international affilaiation when some of the bigger forces involved had clarified the air. We were somehat disspointed to see that they were still fighting against the 1969 unification that had brought all the forces togtehr except the Lambert group in France and the Healy group in England. I think that that unification in which I played a considerable role was quite principled. They appeared to think that this matter was a very important one in their discussions with us. I understand from the grape vine that the OCI has been having some discussions of a very gneral and informal character with xmxm members of the United Secretariat.

All of which shows how confusing matters are axdxhaxxmxhxkxhxmyxx No doubt by your moving around these circles you can get a much clearer picture of what some of the problems are confronting world Trotskyism --and the revolutionary left in general . Which brings me to your article. We have just gone to press and have decided that we will not publish for about a month. Our plans as a monthly are actually to publish ten issues--missing one in the summer doldrums and another in the Christmas New Year doldrum. I will put it into the hopper for the comrades ' discussion on the next issue. Unfortunatly this puts the postal workers strike which is the lead in a very dated position. I am very glad you are taking on the task of writing. I am wondering what you think of writing something on a more or less regaulr basis along different lines. Somewhile back Ernest Mandel used to write a really brilliant column that xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx appeared weekly in the Militant--we used the od one in our monthly. They were varied. Some of them were an over view of Europe--trands, within the economy, within the left etc. Some of them centered in on some trend that was illustrative of the whole. Some of them were coposed of what you might call notes on varied aspects. I did the same thing when I was in Europe over different periods--although I tended to follow developments in Britain as I felt that the had particular interest to Canadian soci lists and union militants. La Monde is an excellent paper but still much clued in on the old Franch parts of the world. Of course every once in a while it has some top writers contribute on developments in the USSR or Chile etc etc. I found I had to follow different papers. for my purpose. The Daily Telegraph had better coverage of Ceylon developments at a crucial period than any other paper I cameacross . I used to always buy the weekend editions of the Times and the Observer. What I used to do was faithfully read these various papers ,amrk up articles that seemd of importance and then about five days before my deadline clipp them, spread them out and make a decision as to what I would write

When I wasn't going to various congresses I wrote on a big scale for Intercontinental that is the general press of the movement and then special items for the Canadian press. Of course writing is good training for thinking .

So as I say--I will turn this over to the editorial board and I will be writing to you about our next deadlines . There is some merit ~~in~~ a regualr column-like contribution—somewhat personalized --A Canadian in Paris ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ I think that it would get a good readership. The Star does this with good effect right now with George Bain in England--they had an excellent series by another oneof their top correspondents somewhat earlier prior and during the last elections there. Perhaps you recall them.

Lots more to say --but I want to get this off

fraternally

Ross Dowson

Forward, Nov. 1974

Maurice Spector, pioneer Canadian socialist, on the national question

By Gary O'Brien

The following article by Gary O'Brien stems from his recently completed M.A. thesis at Carleton University, Ottawa, on Maurice Spector and the Origins of Canadian Trotskyism. We print it as a contribution to the history of the Canadian revolutionary socialist movement.

The status of the Canadian state and the question of nationalism have never been satisfactorily settled by the Canadian Left. Varied images have been drawn ranging from the portrayal of Canada as an underdeveloped colony of the Third World, to a fully developed and autonomous imperialist state. Because factional and tactical conflict has often replaced concrete analysis, grave errors have been (and still are being) committed and revolutionary will is still being substituted for the historical process. The abuse of the national question has often led to a failure of the Left to use it to its potential in mobilizing Canadian workers against the exploitation and oppression of which they are the primary victims.

The national question was not born with the Watkins Report in 1968, but has been a burning issue for socialists since the 1920's. Given the present controversy among the Left, and particularly among Trotskyists, it may be instructive to review what one of Canada's most eminent socialists, the first Trotskyist on the North American continent and he founder of the Canadian movement, had to say on the question. Providing us with certain guidelines and trends of thought, such a review lends a historical perspective to the issue; this could be useful in making future studies, strategies and tactics.

For Maurice Spector, who until his expulsion in 1928 was the national chairman of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), its recognized theoretical leader and honored as the first North American member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the national question was the most important political issue during the 1920's. In 1925 'Canadian Independence' was made the Party's central political slogan.

National Question Central

Canada was characterized as a 'colony', but not in the sense of being a member of the underdeveloped colonial world. Spector was wary of the term 'colony' for it has misleading connotations: he considered his views to be completely in harmony with Lenin's, whom he noted had written in his study Imperialism: "Once we are speaking of colonial policy, in the period of capitalist-imperialism, it is indispensible to note that finance capital and its international policy, which resolves itself into the struggle of the great powers for the economic and political division of the world, gives rise to a number of transitional forms of state dependence. And the division into two principal groups of countries — possessors of colonies and colonized areas — is not sufficient to characterize the period. It is necessary to take into account the various kinds of dependence of countries which are politically independent in form but are surrounded in reality with a fine network of financial and diplomatic bonds."

Spector pointed out that Canadian society had been the product of uneven and combined development. While in the 1890's Canada's leading exports had been primarily agricultural products, by the 1920's manufacturing had increased greatly in importance and industry had appeared rapidly in its concentrated form. As early as 1910, the federal government had been so concerned about the increased capitalization of industry that it had introduced a bill to curb monopolies. By the late 1920's, Canada was exporting not only over half a billion dollars worth of manufactured goods, but also $70 million worth of capital per year.

Yet while such development put Canada in the lists of 'advanced countries', pre-capitalist relationships lingered. The agricultural sector was still larger than the industrial. Farmers were still of such economic importance they could win a parliamentary majority in three of the provinces, including Ontario, during the 1920's. Most important, the ownership of much of industry remained with British and American capitalists, hindering the emergence of a powerful national bourgeoisie. Constitutionally, Canada was still subordinate to Britain, was without the right to declare war and peace or to be the final arbitrator of her legal system.

Canadian Nationalism Progressive

For Spector, it did matter to workers "whether the country in which they carry on their struggle for freedom from wage slavery is a colony or whether it has achieved its complete sovereignty" — for workers were vitally affected by the regime of the British North America Act (BNA). Breaking the Imperial connection would mean an end to the use of Canadians as 'cannon-fodder' for British wars, as in 1914-17. It would also mean re-writing the BNA Act which, by assigning jurisdiction of social legislation to the provinces but keeping control of criminal law centralized, permitted the federal government to be used "against the Labor movement whenever it suits it". It also raised the hope of abolishing the Senate which had killed J.S. Woodsworth's bill for old age pensions.

The national question was important not only to Canadian workers but also to the oppressed masses of the British Empire. Britain, weakened by World War I and rapidly losing industrial hegemony to the US needed the military and financial support of her Dominions to keep the shaky Empire together. Given the increased industrialization of Canada and the ensuing mood of independence in her bourgeoisie (witnessed by Mackenzie King's refusal to support Britain on Turkey in 1922), Spector perceived that the British Empire contained within itself "the seeds of its own destruction" and that "Canada, at the present time, is one of the weak links in the chain of the Empire". Through independence, if she could break that link, the entire Empire would collapse, freeing not only the colonies from imperialism but setting off a revolution in Britain itself.

Immediately following Spector's

expulsion, the new CPC leadership, on direct orders from the Stalinized Comintern, disowned the slogan of 'Canadian Independence' as counter-revolutionary and charged that Spector had regarded Canadian capitalists as an oppressed bourgeoisie who had a revolutionary role to play and that he had urged the Party to "remain silent upon the question of proletarian revolution". Such accusations were utterly false. At no time did Spector approach the national question believing Canadian capitalists were anti-imperialist or that socialists must postpone revolutionary activity until national independence was achieved.

Given the fact that Spector had protested Stalin's characterization of Chiang Kai-shek as anti-imperialist and had anticipated the Russian Left Opposition's criticisms of the Comintern's disastrous policy in China five months before Leon Trotsky himself, it was hardly likely Spector would wish to repeat such erroneous policies in his own country. Spector emphasized that a "capitalist independent Canada is not much better than a capitalist colony", and made it clear that "if we oppose British imperialism, we are equally opposed to American and Canadian capitalism". Even in the 1926 election in which King sought support against Governor-General Byng's refusal to grant him the right to dissolve Parliament, Spector, in the headlines of the CPC's election manifesto, urged workers to "Keep Class Issue Clear and Vote Labor—Liberals and Conservatives Are Tools of Vested Interest—Country is Ruled by Dictatorship of Bankers and Manufacturers".

Canada Weak Link

Spector was looking however to exacerbate the conflict among British, American and Canadian capitalists. He supported a national flag for Canada, on the grounds that "Any national movement that will help liquidate this British Empire deserves the support of the working class. Flags may be the symbols of such movements. The replacement of the imperialist flag by the national flag would weaken the imperialist foe and speed the day when the Red Flag of working class internationalism would replace the flags of nationalism."

There was danger, however, in over-exaggerating the importance of intra-bourgeois conflict, a danger Spector was well aware of. With the Liberals' tentative support in 1927 for sending Canadian troops to China to bolster British imperialism there, it was clear that Canadian capitalists only aspired to be partners of imperialist ventures and were not interested in national independence. As Spector wrote: "But, for an independent tariff policy, a free hand in exploitation of the workers at home, commercial treaty-making power, diplomatic representation and a seat on the League of Nations, the Dominion bourgeoisie do not need secession. An alliance with British Imperialism is enough . . . . The fight of workers and farmers of Canada against the imperialist war danger must therefore be aimed against the Canadian bourgeoisie as a joint partner of British imperialism."

For Maurice Spector, then, Canadian nationalism was a progressive force since it was both anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist. National sovereignty was not just an academic question but was "bound up vitally with the everyday problems of the class struggle in Canada, whether these struggles are over questions of imperialist war, social legislation or the status of their trade union movement".

Spector was willing to participate with other leftist groups on the national question, such as J.S. Woodsworth's Independent Labor Party (ILP), which also voiced opposition to British imperialism and Canada's involvement in foreign wars. He also supported the creation of the All-Canadian Congress of Labor, as well as those fighting for more autonomy within the American Federation of Labor-controlled Trades and Labor Congress. He did not consider Canadian nationalism 'chauvinist' but rather a transitional stage to true working class internationalism.

With Spector's expulsion, the CPC commenced its zig-zag approach to the class struggle in Canada. Canada was no longer deemed a colony but rather a fully developed capitalist country where all the characteristics of imperialism defined by Lenin, with the sole exception of the possession of colonies, were found. The Anglo-American presence in Canadian society was seen as having no effect on the course of the proletarian revolution. Canada was chiefly an exporter of manufactured goods and was fighting America and Britain for markets in Latin America and the Pacific. In the latter '30's, in its Popular Front days, the CPC went completely the other way, characterizing Canada as a colony in which workers must ally with sections of the 'progressive bourgeoisie' to ensure the supremacy of 'democratic' and 'anti-imperialist' forces within Canada. How Canada suddenly lost her imperialist characteristics in so short a time has never been explained.

Contrasting Spector's stand with both analyses made by the CPC under Stalin's guidance and their disastrous consequences for Canadian workers, there is no doubt his was more consistent with Canadian reality. Based on concrete analysis and not factional conflict, Spector approached the national question from both a Canadian and world orientation, and attempted to forge transitional slogans which corresponded to the socio-economic situation of Canadian society at the time. His methods and findings should be noted by all Canadian socialists of today.

40 Homewood Ave #2311
Toronto
December 16, 1974

Dear Darrell;

I am very sorry about the delay in this matter. I was away in the Barbadoes for a couple of weeks and since then many other matters have interfered.

I have gone through the copy of the agreement that I had at the meeting which I marked up as accurately as I could at the time, and also through my notes. I hope that my interpretation of wh t was said and generally agreed upon is correct. Of course there are whole areas where there were no changes and in general the changes were few.

I have sent a copy to Alan also ,with a copy of this note. Possibly we do not need to get together before a meeting of all lot owners. Perhaps we can get away with a phone call or two--and I can send copies to the other shareholders. Then Alan may think that it is good and clear enough that a strictly official version could be typed up and sent out to the lot owners to bring in with them to a meeting where we could settle that with signatures and also take up the by-laws, elect officers etc.

Probably Alan has a good idea of what the by-laws of such an operation should be and they could be handled quickly

A couple of small matters that should be looked into. The agreement describes the area as the south half of Lot 39 on the 4th concession--on the plan, a copy of which I have sent Alan with the lot numbers and owners names on it it is described as "part of Lot 39 north of Tulley Road." We should check that out on the deed which is in your possession. I would also appreciate knowing what your records show Steve Harding as having paid for his lot. Could you drop this info in the mail to me as soon as possible as i want to draw up the books and give an accounting to all. I have finished any major expenditures on the fire place and when down last I asked Tulley to plow and break the lower field which has become overrun with golden rod for three years now. We should consider getting him to work it this spring again and planting a few squash, potatoes or tomatoes for our use. Section one clears me of any claims (monetary) that anyone might have with regards to what lot owners have paid me.

So we do not get at any cross purposes I am waiting to hear from you before contacting Alan--but as I note above he has a copy of the agreement as I make it out and also the lot plans with name and number.

The best time to contact me is late in the evening or leave a message at the Socialist League headqurters ---363-6755

fraternally

Ross Dowson

December 24, 1974
FORWARD
Box 778,Adelaide St P.O.
Toronto, Canada

M.Rashid
P.O. Veliyankode
Dist-Malappuram
Kerala, India

Dear Comrade;

We were pleased to he ar from you. The pressure of other work has delayed us from taking up your letter and seeing that you receive our paper on a regualr basis. I have just sent off in the mail numbers 2,3,4,and 5 of Forward. Hecefroth you will get a copy as a matter of course. We will send you copies of pamphlet material that we are putting out. We have just sent off to the press the material that Trotsky wrote on the Ukraine. Perhaps you are aware tha it was written particularly on the request and in collaboration with our Canadian Ukrainian language comrddes. Trotsky even wrote a preface for a pamphlet they intended to publish. Now alosmt 40 years l ater we are publishing the pamphlet. The sons and daughter of Ukrainaian workers who broke from Stalinism many ofvthem swinging to the right ,under the impact of the recent youth radicalisation are interested in our ideas. The cross-Canadian Ukrainian student paper recently published the old man's articles and xxxxxxxx they are very much involved in the campaign in solidarity with the Ukrainian di ssident Valentin Moroz who has been waging a humger strike against his imprisonment in the USSR. We have also published the first of a series of pamphlets on the most highly con!roversial question in the Canadian left--the braod nationalist sentiment that has swept across the country in response to the US domination of the economy and cultural and social life. In the trade u ion movement this has resulted in a powerful demand for Canadian trade union autonomy.

It is not quite correct to say that the comrades of the Socialis League have split from the LSA-LSO. The LSA-LSO is not at all what it was. First there was an ultra left split off, a product of the inter national factional struggle, encouraged by the Mandel-Krivine forces. This group now called the Revolutionary Marxist Group and in Quebec the GMR published the Old Mole and Taupe Rouge.They are now the biggest and most dynamic Trotskyist formation in Canada. They are ultra left. The pity is that in the process of the struggle the majority leadership of the LSA-LSO adapted to their ultra leftist pressure and has been continuing to do so ever since. First and most import ant they completely dumped our longstanding strategic orientation to the mass labor party formation in Canada, called the New Democratic party. Secondly they reveresed our longstanding recog nition that the anti US imperialist sentiment in Canada was a key aspect of the radicalization---they now designate it reactionary and bourgeois nationalism. In our opinion the LSA-LSO has taken on many of the aspects of a sect. We see ourselves as carrying forward the tradition of the LSA-LSO. In the last month several more comrades have come over to us from the LSA--and I think we can with considerabl accuracy now say that the Socialist League numbers in its ranks the basic cadre of the former LSA-LSO in the Toronto area--the core of the older comrades before the youth radicalization hit our movement and the international majority leadership so outrageously adapted to it, and knocked our movement out of gear. As you no doubt know

couple lines no carbon over

2 lines missing (...)

The next period in Canada while the working class struggles are taking a new turn to militancy is going to be a somewhat complex one for the building of a Trotskyist cadre organization. There are more persons calling themselves Trotksyist in Canada than ever before. Aside from the LSA and the RMG and the SL there is another grping that has come out of the very unstable RMG, the Lambertists have managed to pull something together in Quebec where Healy-Wolforth have a few people and a new group is in the process of formation which will probably establish relations with the International Socialists in Britain which as you possibly know are the biggest revolutionary group in Britain. So as you can see we are going to have to have some experiences to sort things out. I hope you are publishing a paper and that you will exchange copies with us via sea mail. We are anxious to follow developments in Indai. Yes I am very happy to hear that you have taken on the dutires of gaeneral secretary of the Communist League. Lal Salam.

Ross Dowson

UNDATED NOTE FOUND IN FILE

When responding to a toast in favor of the Independent Press — John Swinton, once editor of the NY Times

"There is no such thing in America as an independent press. You know it and I know it. There is not one of you who would dare write his honest opinion and if he did you would know beforehand that it would never appear in print

"I am paid $150 per week for keeping my honest opinion out of the paper I am connected with. Others of you are paid similar salaries for similar work.

"The business of the journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, to fawn at the feet of Mammon and to sell his country and his race for his daily bread. You know this and I know it; and what folly is this to be toasting an independent press!

"We are the tools and vassals of the rich men behind the scenes. We are puppet jacks: they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities and our lives are the property of these men. We are intellectual prostitutes"

both from The Worker Sept 13/24

Roger Babson — statistician-in-chief for the US capitalist class

"The war taught the employing class the secret of the power of widespread propaganda. Impoverished Europe had been aware of this power. It was new to the U.S. Now when we have anything to sell to the American people we know how to sell it. We have learned. We have the schools. We have the pulpit. The employing class owns the press. There is practically no important paper in the United States but is theirs"

(undated, Found in 1974)

85 King Street E
Toronto, Canada

l'internationale
39 rue Piat
Paris XXe France

Dear comrades;

Comrade Franz Modlik was so good as to send us a copy of a resolution that you adopted at your fourth International Conference . The back page listed the names and addresses of the various sections of your international tendency. We note that the publication of your Greek comrades is circulated from your address there in Paris.

There is a considerable number of Greek's living in Toronto at this time --many of them sympathetic to the labor party formation here called the New Democratic party are subscribers to our paper FORWARD. Would it be possible for you to send us say ten copies of this publication so we could see what interest we could arouse in it. Send us the bill along with the material and we will pay promplty.

We are taking the initiative of sending you a copy of our monthly paper on a regular basis in the hope that you will reciprocate by sending us l'internationale.

comradely

Ross Dowson

CLASS SERIES

THE MARXIST VIEW OF LIFE AND CULTURE

2nd CLASS — A MARXIST VIEW OF ART — JAN. 31

The History of Painting in Canada Toward a Peoples Art, by Barry Lord has been widely reviewed since its publication last month. The mere fact that it seriously attempts to grapple with this broad question of increasing interest to Canadians makes it important. The speaker, Ross Dowson, will focus on some of the problems posed by this book.

3rd CLASS — MARXISM AND THE LAW — FEB. 7

Police violence, plea bargaining, wire-tapping, and police secrecy. What is the law, constitutions, and the state? Radical lawyer Harry Kopyto will make these ideas the basis for his presentation.

4th CLASS — MARXISM AND PSYCHOLOGY — FEB. 14

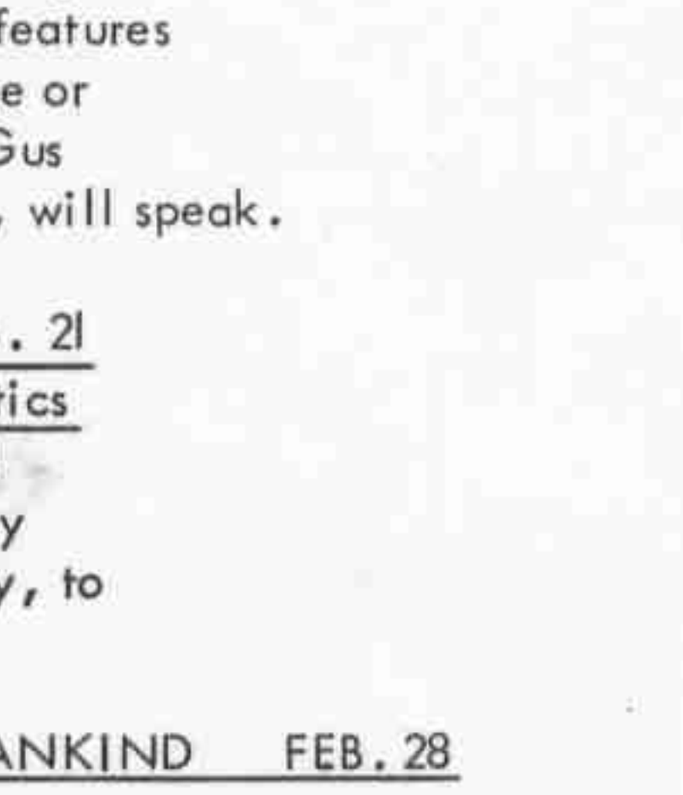
Frustration with family and sexual relations, alienation from work, and inability to cope with the pressures of everyday life are prevalent features of today's society. An ever growing number of people are turning to one or another form of psychological treatment to solve their problems. Dr. Gus Tolentino, a well known Toronto psychiatrist and pro-abortion activist, will speak.

5th CLASS — MARXISM, DIALECTICS, AND SCIENCE — FEB. 21

Frederick Engels, in his famous and prophetic book The Dialectics of Nature, showed how the Marxist scientific method could be applied beyond the field of social sciences, and is relevant to the revolutionary discoveries taking place in the fields of biology, physics and astronomy, to name a few. This topic will be discussed by Stu Sinclair.

6th CLASS — A MARXIST VIEW OF ALIENATION AND SOCIALIST MANKIND — FEB. 28

Assembly lines, boredom, frustration, powerlessness -- the nightmare of Charlie Chaplin's Modern Times -- this is the imagery which most closely mirrors our daily lives. Alientation -- what is it? What would life be like without it? Marxism has made an essential contribution to the development of an analysis of alienation as a fundamental aspect of class society. Speaker to be announced.



Auspices of the Socialist League

FRIDAY NIGHTS AT 8 P.M.
at 85 King Street East, 3rd Floor, Toronto, Ontario
Phone: 363-6755

FORWARD FORUM

INTERNATIONAL UNIONS and THE CANADIAN LEFT

A MARXIST ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE UNIONS IN CANADA

speaker
Norman Penner

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE,
GLENDON COLLEGE

fri.march 19th
room n204 8pm
252 bloor st w
(Bloor & St.George)

Student
Activist at York University

the DYNAMICS of the CANADIAN WORKING CLASS

A Marxist analysis of the social service sector - its dynamics and importance in the Canadian class struggle.

Speaker

ROSS DOWSON

long time socialist activist & labor writer

FORWARD FORUMS
are held at
53 GERRARD ST. W.
(except March 19)
for futher information
595-1284

Mar 12

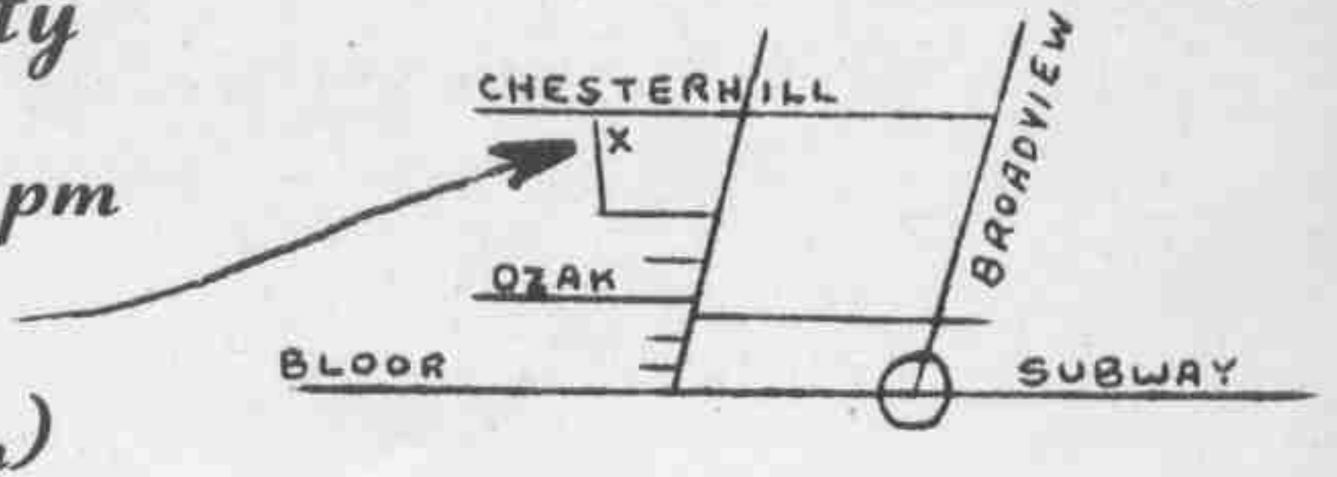
How do Marxists see the changing relationship of white collar to blue collar workers?

Forward Spring Party

Saturday March 26, 8:00 pm

50 Thorncliffe Ave.

Refreshments ($1.00 Admission)



Canada in Question

• CONFEDERATION CHALLENGED, April 8

with Wayne Roberts, editor, Forward

The bankruptcy of Confederation and the forces behind and against Confederation

• QUEBEC'S ROAD TO INDEPENDENCE, April 15

with Ross Dowson

The growth of the independentist consciousness.

What the PQ means for the labour and socialist movement.

• CANADA'S SURVIVAL? April 22

with Murray Dowson

The developing movement for a new constitution.

Will Canada survive US imperialism? What will the new Canada be?

SPONSORED BY

THE FORWARD FORUM

53 GERRARD ST. W. 8 PM

INFORMATION 595-8284

and come to the

Socialist Forum

8:00 P.M.

Three Important Discussions -

Thursday May 9th — Canadian National Unionism
speaker Ross Dowson

Wednesday May 22nd — Socialist Strategy and the NDP
(to be announced)

Wednesday June 5th — Womens Liberation and Socialism
speaker Ellie Kirzner

held at

St. Pauls United Church Hall
#121 Avenue Road
Side door on Webster
(one south of Davenport)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:
SOCIALIST LEAGUE
85 King Street East
3rd floor
Toronto
M5C1G3
Phone: 363-6755

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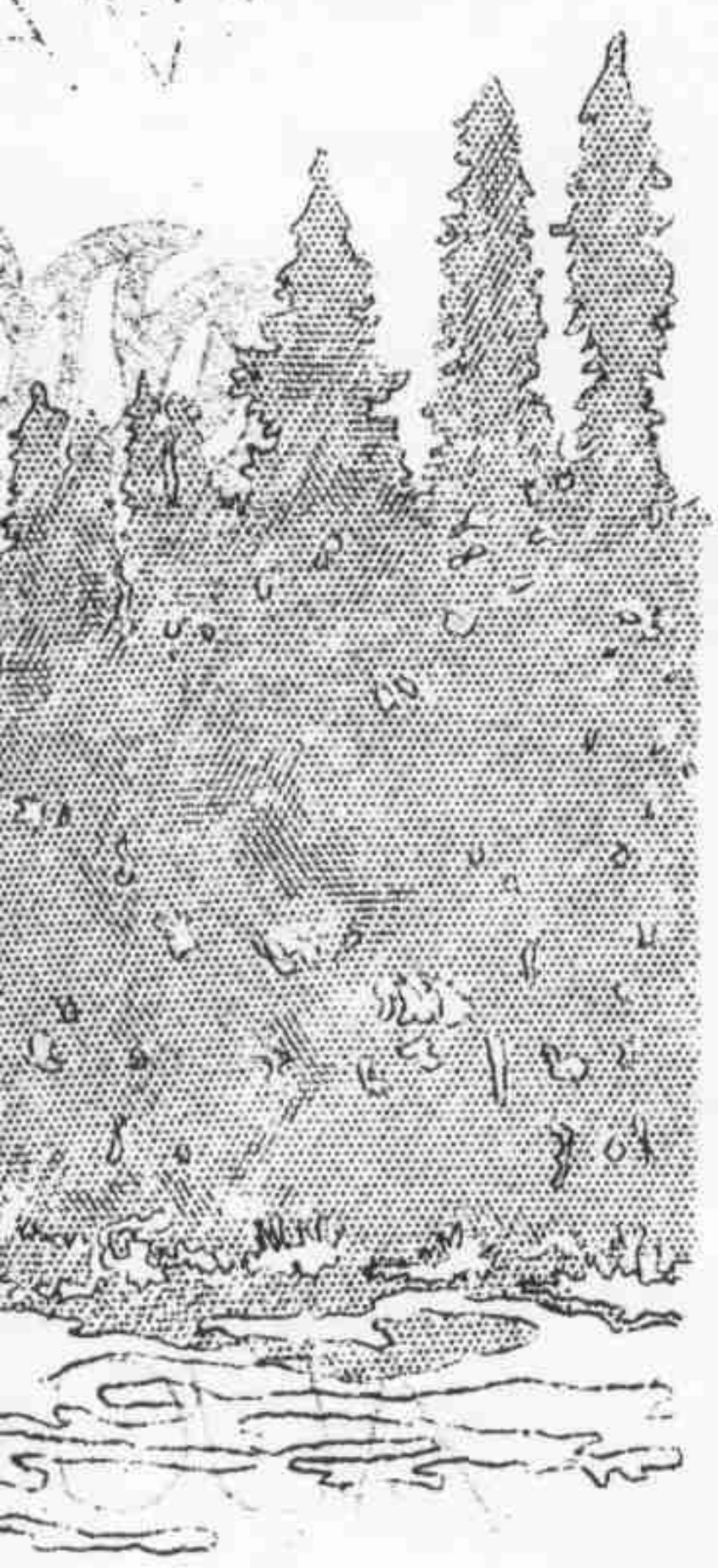


THREE TALKS ON STALINISM TODAY

HIKING

THE SITUATION IN THE U.S.S.R.

What are some of the key economic and social-problems still facing Soviet workers nearly sixty years after the revolution? What is the state of the dissident movement? What are the prospects for change? These and other questions will be probed to provide an up-to-date view of conditions in the U.S.S.R.

Speaker: to be announced

THE DEVELOPING CRISIS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES

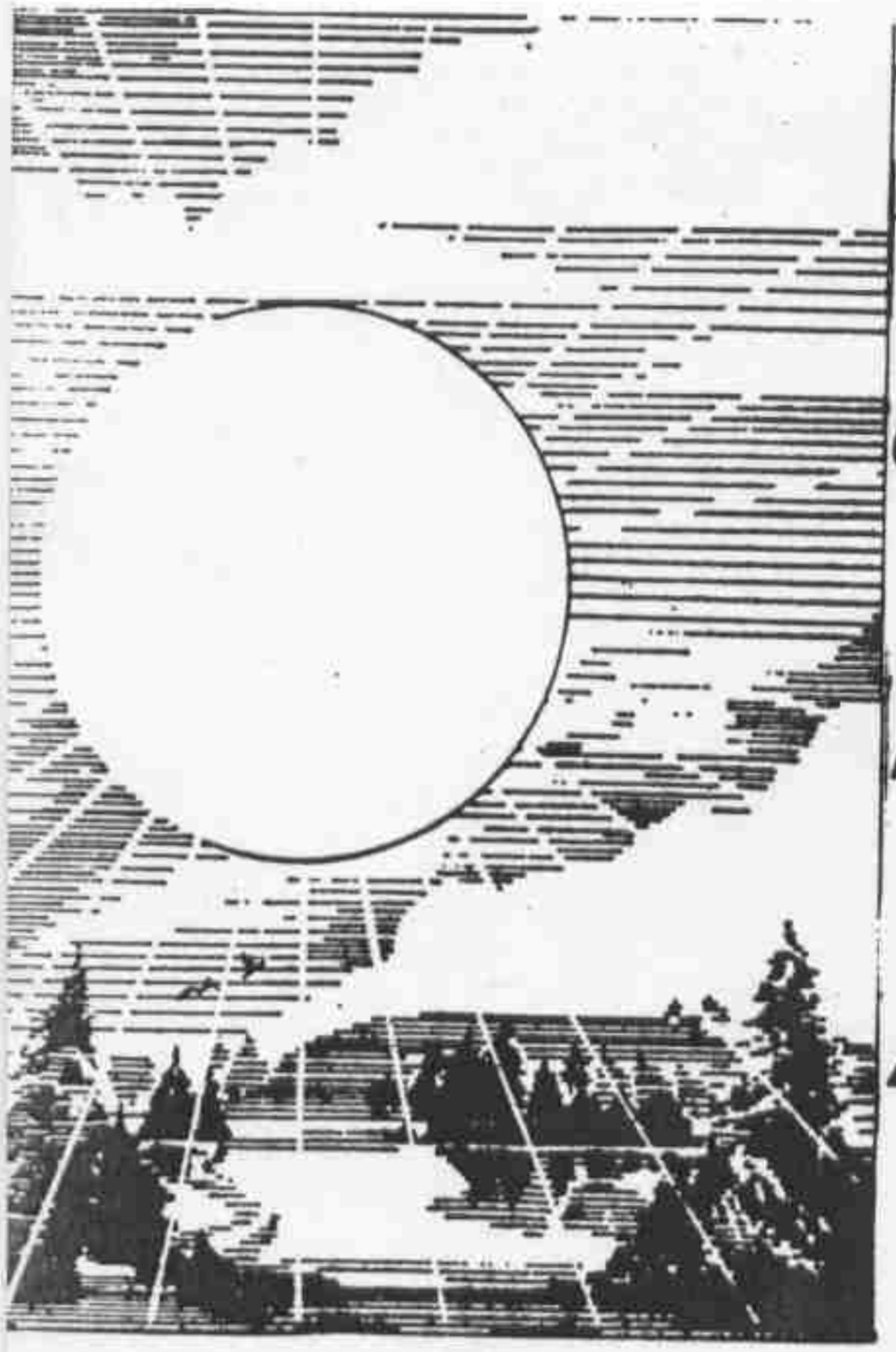
The 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia touched off a series of crises in the European CPs. Under the impact of the detente and the current crisis of world capitalism, the divisions have deepened. What's behind these developments?

Speaker: Gord Doctorow

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

Based on an appreciation of a recent book on the history of the Canadian CP by Ivan Avakumovic.

Speaker: Ross Dowson



COME TO CAMP POUNDMAKER AUG 28,29

FOR A WEEKEND OF HIKING, SWIMMING, VOLLEYBALL, SOFTBALL, TASTY FOOD, CAMPFIRES, SCENIC BEAUTY, RELAXATION AND SOCIALIST EDUCATIONALS.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

1. Dale Ritch will speak on the topic of The European Electoral Arena and it's importance to revolutionaries. Emphasis will be placed on the recent election results in Portugal and Italy where working class and revolutionary candidates and slates made major gains.

2. Ross Dowson will focus on the American Bicentennial for his talk on the American Revolution and it's relationship to the Canadian socialist struggle.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

The Forward Forum on Aug. 20 will feature Paul Kellogg speaking on the topic of The General Strike.

The regular Friday night forum on Aug. 27 will be cancelled so that people can go to the camp on Fri. evening.

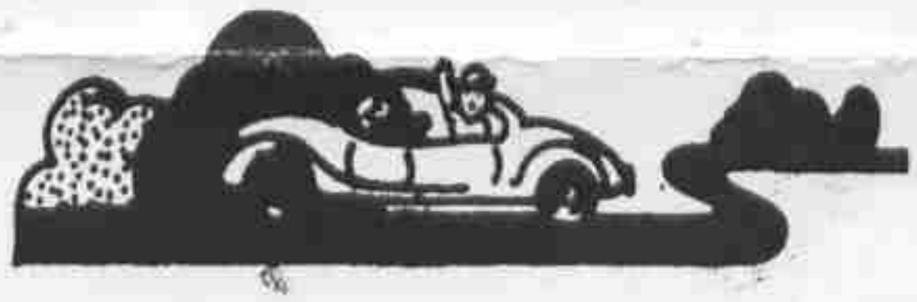
* Please bring your own sleeping bag, pillow, flashlight, swimsuit, raincoat.

* Sleeping cabins are available.

* Prepared Communal Meals:
  Sat.-lunch, supper
  Sun.-breakfast, lunch

* Car pools leaving from 53 Gerrard St. W.
  Friday Aug. 27 at 7:30 P.M.
  Saturday Aug. 28 at 8:30 A.M.
  Returning Sun. afternoon and evening.

* The cost of food and lodging for Sat. and Sun. is $8 per person($7 with tent) Children aged 12 or under half price.



HOW TO GET TO THE CAMP

Take the 401 eastbound from Toronto.

each Friday night at 8 pm

Forward Forum

53 Gerrard St. W.

(at Bay)

Phone: 595-1284

September 10th: Citizen Control of the Police:

A noted Canadian lawyer discusses the impact of the Morand commission report and the reaction to it. A socialist perspective on why we need citizen control of the police.
Speaker: Harry Kopyto.

September 17th: The Sociology of Trade Unions:

Are the trade unions a progressive or regressive force in capitalist society? What is the role and nature of the trade union bureaucracy and how does it relate to the the struggles of the working class? How should militants orient to the trade union movement?
Speaker: Ross Dowson.

September 24th: Limits to Growth or Limits on Growth?

A socialist perspective on the Club of Rome thesis. Are we doomed to a future of ever greater poverty or stagnation? Or are our economic and ecological problems solvable through the elimination of the capitalist mode of production and institution of a planned economy?
Speaker: to be announced

Three forums designed to deal with some of the problems of everyday life and provide a perspective on them.

SUBSCRIBE TO
forward
$1 - 6 issues $2 - 12 issues
Send cheque or Money Order to
P.O. Box 778, Adelaide St.P.O.
Toronto, Ontario M5C 2K1

(Undated in 1974 file)

40 Homewood Ave # 2311
Toronto M4Y 2K2

Dear Art; (Grey)

Thanks for the lengthy letter--- Many of the matters you raise as quite interesting but I am unable to take up at this time for lack of time.

Good to see however that you are in fighting trim and that you appear to have worked out some satisfactory living operations.

I fail utterley to see how you can even suggest that the class struggle is the delusion of the age letalone say it in the name of Hitler. The class struggle is the one thing that I see all about me--surging, ebbeing, rising and falling but persistant all present. The only problem is that it has not yet been resolved ---in the only way that it can or ever will be resolved--in the victory of the world working class, their seizing the power, and with that power gradually eliminating themselves and the class struggle. Delusion ? what could be more utterely absurd, Art.

I do not know why, on the basis of the very rational statement by Trotsky that you can say that I should have disbanded the Trotsyist movemnt long ago. Aside from the absurd notion that what I do or do not do would significantly settle that matter--there are now more persons calling themsleves Trotskyist in Canada than there have ever been, not to speak of the number in France and elsewhere, why should I act along your suggested line on the basis of a statement which I fully understand by a man who is not at all as you snidle y say "my master."

Of course the workers did do something during the course of World War II and after which clealy showed that the socialist program is not a Marxist utopia. We had the revolution in Yugoslavia that conquered despite Stalin's deal with Churchill and his efforts to dissipate its forces---we had a whole series of revolutionary up surges in India, Indo China etc which led to the victory in North Vitnam and then the great Chinese revolution. We have the tremndous upsurge in France where DeGaulle readily admitted in his comments at the time of the death of Thoreaz that power was in the hands of the Communist party---they turned it over to DeGaulle.

Which brings me to your expressed desire to return to the CP presumably when at a future time Moscow wants it to go somewhere. What possibly could be the reason for a new approach to the USSR. Has something new been happening that we were unprepared for. As I dialectician I am awarw of contradictions but what is the synthesis. Of course the Soviet bureaucracy aids Cuba and Vitnam--it has aided the latter but on two ocassions blackmailed them into settlements that blocked the revolution in its tracks in the interests of its diplomatic maneuvers with world imperialism. The Communist party's policies(Cana da) are determined by

the diplomatic needs of the parasitic bureaucracy that has politically exproopriated the Soviet masses. The leadership of the CP is one that has accepted this, condoned it over the years. Such a leadership is completely bankrupt and a membership that accepts uch a leadershi p is also bankrupt.

(R.D)
attached to letter to RD
from Art ——?